Los Angeles Times

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Speaker's city more nuanced on Trump charges

As McCarthy derides ex-president's criminal counts, some at home see them as overdue.

By Arit John

BAKERSFIELD — Before a Manhattan grand jury voted to indict former President Trump in connection with an alleged hush-money payment to adult film actor Stormy Daniels, House Speaker Kevin McCarthy told reporters how he thought the American people viewed the case.

"I think in your heart of hearts you know, too, that you think this is just political," McCarthy said during a March 21 news conference. "And I think that's what the rest of the country thinks, and we're kind of tired of that."

But back home in McCarthy's Bakersfield congressional district, the reaction is more nuanced. Some think it's about time, while others wonder whether the time has passed.

For Republicans here — many of whom have long supported McCarthy and think the 15 rounds of voting he endured for the speakership made him stronger — last week's indictment is as Trump has described it: a politically motivated witch hunt meant to keep him out of office.

"The left has a batting average of zero against Donald Trump," said Greg Perrone, president of the Greater Bakersfield Republican Assembly, a conservative group involved in local politics. "Whatever is possible to do to make sure he cannot run for president, they're going to do that."

Perrone said he would view Trump's actions negatively if he is ultimately found guilty. But like other conservatives, he pointed to a Thursday tweet from former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-San Francisco), who wrote that "everyone has the right to a trial to prove innocence," as a sign that Trump may not get fair treatment.

"The law says innocent until proven guilty. But here's the former speaker of the House saying he has to prove that he's innocent," he said. "I think that definitely typifies the sentiment of the left: He's clearly guilty. Now he's got to prove it that he's not."

A Quinnipiac poll conducted March 23-27 found that 62% of Americans surveyed — including 93% of Republicans, 70% of independents and 29% of Democrats — believed Manhattan Dist. Atty. Alvin Bragg's investigation was "mainly motivat-

[See **Bakersfield,** A8]

BASIN'S CREEPING SLUDGE

Could acres of L.A. County sewage brought to Tulare Lake each year contaminate its rising floodwaters?

By Brennon Dixson and Susanne Rust
REPORTING FROM KETTLEMAN CITY, CALIF.

Photographs by Robert Gauthier Los Angeles Times

A DARK BAND of liquid, top, spreads within the floodwaters of Tulare Lake in Corcoran, Calif. Above, an earthmover forms a makeshift levee wall beside a swelling irrigation ditch at the lake.

Here at the western edge of the Tulare Lake Basin dwells a smelly industrial site the size of 150 football fields. Roughly eight times a day, its operations are replenished with a truckload of human waste from the residents of Los Angeles County.

Since 2016, the Tulare Lake Compost facility has been converting Southland sewage sludge into high-grade organic fertilizer, and sparing L.A. County the bother of burying its waste in local landfills.

But as epic Sierra Nevada snowpack threatens to overwhelm this phantom lake bed with spring runoff — inundating a region that has already suffered flooding from a series of powerful storms — some fear the facility could be transformed into an environmental disaster.

"When the southwest corner of Tulare Lake floods, thousands of tons of L.A. County sewage sludge, containing toxic heavy metals, will become part of the mix in the newly formed lake," said Tom Frantz, a retired schoolteacher and environmental activist who once lived in the area but moved to San Luis Obispo three years ago.

"You can't grow food for humans where this waste has been spread," Frantz said.

Area water managers and government officials acknowledge that if Tulare Lake Compost were flooded, the resulting contamination could trickle into groundwater and contaminate streams and rivers throughout the region. An even bigger risk comes from scores of waste lagoons at nearby chicken and dairy ranches that dot the valley floor.

It's for this reason that officials are now keeping a wary eye on levees and other structures that are designed to keep floodwaters from entering waste ponds.

"We have seen it already driving around Tulare in the last few weeks," said Angel Fernandez-Bou, a researcher with UC Merced's Environmental Systems Graduate Group and a Western states senior climate scientist with the Union of Concerned Scientists. "Intensive cattle operations that are not careful about their waste had that waste spread beyond their properties, with

[See **Tulare Lake,** A7]

A hidden flaw that can topple homes

Grants to help some Californians retrofit common design at risk in quakes

Los Angeles Times

A HOME was destroyed in the 1971 Sylmar earthquake when the second story collapsed on its garage.

By Rong-Gong Lin II

It is a housing design common across California: single-family homes with living spaces atop garages.

But seismic experts are now raising alarms about this style, saying it is vulnerable to collapse in a major earthquake.

The homes are at risk because the weight of the living space — which is held up on either side of the garage door by skinny, flimsy supports that can bend or break in a quake — can come crashing down.

Because the ground story has already been weakened by a missing wall — where the garage door sits — and is top-heavy because it's overlaid by an upper story, this type of house is called a soft-story home. Such dwellings built before 2000 are vulnerable, experts say.

"If they have full collapse, that's an 8- or 9-foot drop. ... The house is dropping with all the furniture flying around in it," said structural engineer Janiele Maffei, chief mitigation officer with the California Earthquake Authority and president of

[See **Flaw,** A8]

Providing abortion pills across the globe

A Dutch doctor adds Americans to her list of those who need help gaining access.

By Laura King

AMSTERDAM — It was nearly three decades ago, as a young medical trainee in West Africa, that Rebecca Gomperts witnessed scenes that would set in motion her life's work. Gruesome hemorrhages, perforated wombs, bloodied young women gasping out their lives: all the aftermath of botched illegal abortions.

"The methods — oh, how invasive they were," the 57-year-old Dutch activist-physician said, shaking her head at the memory of stricken women staggering or being carried into the hospital. "Sticks. Bleach."

In the intervening decades, Gomperts — founder of a trio of organizations that work to broaden abortion access worldwide — has sailed on shipboard clinics, delivered abortion pills by drone, and seen the inside of countless courtrooms. She's received international accolades for her work, but has also been shouted down, pelted with eggs, even confronted by warships off the Portuguese coast.

After years of activism focused on other parts of the globe, Gomperts, whose telemedicine group Aid Access helps pregnant patients obtain abortion pills, has become a central figure in the

[See **Abortion,** A4]

COLUMN ONE

Seeking tolerance in heart of Jewish L.A.

Pico-Robertson neighborhood offers glimmers of hope amid spike in antisemitism, other hate crimes.

By Tyrone Beason

The Museum of Tolerance pierces your heart from the moment you step inside.

Portraits of Holocaust survivors line a spiral walkway down to an exhibit immersing you in a world of grief.

In a series of small rooms with dim theatrical lighting, human-scale dioramas, brought to life with voice-over narration, depict the rise of antisemitism in Nazi Germany and the systematic murder of 6 million Jews during World War II.

"My wish is that the world will learn that hatred is evil and only tolerance and love can bring peace on Earth," reads the sentiment under the picture of Esther Stuhl, who survived the persecution of Jews in Krakow, Poland.

[See **Tolerance,** A12]

Christina House Los Angeles Times

STUDENT visitors to the Museum of Tolerance in L.A. watch a montage depicting the rise of antisemitism during the Nazi era.

LSU reaches hoops heaven
Tigers beat Iowa for women's trophy. Connecticut and San Diego State clash tonight for men's title. **SPORTS, D1**

A clever gambit in the art world
The Getty Museum's plan to share a British masterpiece creates a stir. **CALENDAR, E1**

Outside money shaping contest
Union and corporate spending helps three candidates in Valley race. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

Weather
Breezy afternoon.
L.A. Basin: 62/45. **B6**

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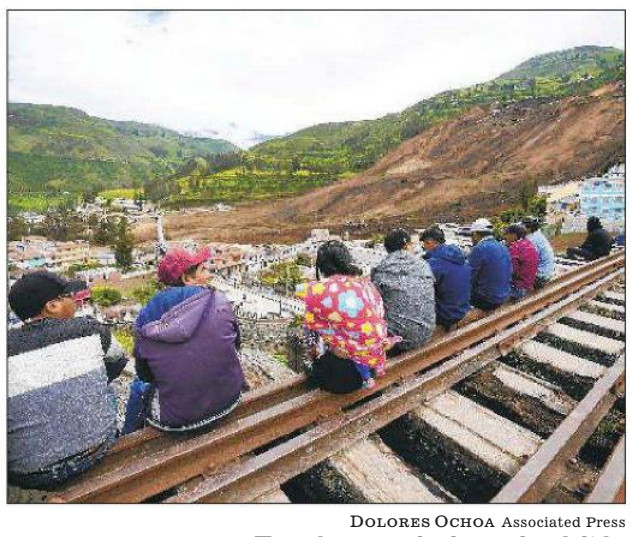
VISIT…

Why do migrants make the perilous northward trek?

By Leila Miller



Dolores Ochoa Associated Press

ECUADOREANS on Tuesday get a look at a landslide that buried homes and killed at least seven people.

Bloomberg

VENEZUELANS protest corruption. The U.S. began expelling Venezuelans in October under Title 42.

MEXICO CITY — Last week's deadly fire at a migrant detention center in northern Mexico has again raised questions of why, amid harsh U.S. immigration policies, migrants continue to make the dangerous journey north.

What makes conditions at home so untenable that they outweigh the hostilities of the migrant trail or the chance of being turned back at the U.S. border?

The 39 men who died and the dozens who were wounded in the Ciudad Juarez blaze came from Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Venezuela and Colombia — countries beset by political instability, poverty and violence.

Those conditions, as well as natural disasters and inequalities worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic, are driving people north.

Mexico, which accounts for the most border crossings, has agreed to accept those turned out of the U.S. under Title 42, a public health policy that allows immigration agents to quickly expel asylum seekers.

Those asylum seekers now wait in packed shelters for Title 42 to lift in May or for appointments with border officials — made through an overloaded mobile app — in the hopes of qualifying for a humanitarian exemption to the health policy.

But officials and advocates contend that Mexico is not equipped to handle the influx of people stranded there.

They are bracing for the summer, when the U.S. is expected to roll out a policy that will limit asylum access for migrants who entered the country without authorization and didn't apply for protections on the way.

In border cities such as Ciudad Juarez, shelter directors are already struggling to add bed space, and human rights groups have decried arbitrary detentions of migrants by police.

Apart from Mexico, here are the countries whose citizens account for the most encounters between U.S. border officials and migrants who attempted to cross in January and February, and the factors that are leading people to flee northward.

Venezuela

More than 7 million Venezuelans have fled the country since 2015 amid crippling poverty and political crises.

Authoritarian President Nicolás Maduro has crushed political freedoms. Government mismanagement and corruption, as well as a drop in oil prices, fueled a humanitarian disaster with severe shortages of food and medicine.

Still, in 2022, inflation slowed from 686.4% to 234%. And for the first time in seven years, the poverty rate is falling — to 50.5% in 2022 from 65.2% in 2021, according to a study by Andrés Bello Catholic University.

Dany Bahar, a Brown University professor who studies immigration, attributed the drop to the Venezuelan government's loosening of foreign currency controls, combined with residents receiving remittances from abroad.

Despite the gains, the top 10% of Venezuelans earn an average of $553 a month, and the poorest 10% bring in the equivalent of about $8, the study said.

The number of encounters between U.S. border officials and Venezuelan migrants without legal status trying to enter the U.S. — which peaked in September at nearly 34,000 — has dropped dramatically since the Biden administration began expelling Venezuelans in October under the Title 42 policy.

The administration simultaneously launched a parole program to allow into the country Venezuelans with U.S. sponsors who can guarantee financial support; the program was later expanded to include Cubans, Haitians and Nicaraguans. Migrants must go through the application process before flying to the United States.

Honduras

One of the deadliest countries in Latin America last year, Honduras recorded 35.8 homicides per 100,000 residents, according to the think tank InSight Crime, which investigates organized crime in the region.

In December, the government instituted a state of emergency to combat gang violence, suspending constitutional rights.

Poverty and political instability are other factors driving migration. In 2019, nearly half of Hondurans lived on less than $6.85 a day; 13% lived on less than $2.15.

For many Hondurans, the impetus to leave the country came from two 2020 hurricanes — affecting more than 4 million people and displacing hundreds of thousands — combined with the effects of the pandemic.

Ecuador

Many migrants from Ecuador are from the lower middle class or just below the poverty line, according to Andrew Selee, president of the Washington-based Migration Policy Institute.

By the end of 2022, 5.4 million Ecuadoreans, 30% of the population, lived in poverty.

Among those leaving the country are people who lost jobs during the pandemic and hope to take advantage of a labor shortage in the U.S., he said.

"This is really a story in much of the region," he said. "Most of Latin America has had a sluggish recovery from the COVID recession, while the U.S. economy has heated up very quickly. People have real reasons for leaving and real hopes for getting a job in the U.S., and then violence adds another element for many people to want to make the journey."

Guatemala

More than half of Guatemalans — including much of the country's Indigenous population — live in poverty.

Even the poorest migrate, often taking out loans to pay smugglers or relying on the support of family and friends in long-established immigrant communities in the United States.

A 2022 study by the Migration Policy Institute and the Indigenous rights group Asociación Pop No'j found that much of Guatemala's migration comes from the Western Highlands, a mountainous, predominantly Maya region, one of the poorest in the country, that has been hit hard by climate change.

Remittances, largely from the United States, made up 17.9% of Guatemala's economy in 2021.

"These are small countries, and they're large diasporas, so you're going to have a big effect," Bahar said of remittances.

Colombia

Armed groups that recruit children have displaced thousands of Colombians as they fight for control of rural areas of the country.

President Gustavo Petro has prioritized peace negotiations with guerrilla groups such as the National Liberation Army, which controls drug trafficking routes.

But if Colombians believe the push for stability will fail, they could be drawn to leave, said Manuel Orozco, a migration expert at the Inter-American Dialogue, a Washington think tank.

Recent migration may also be motivated by Colombians looking for jobs in the U.S. or seeking to reunite with relatives abroad.

Haiti

Extreme poverty and political instability afflict Haiti. The capital, Port-au-Prince, is largely controlled by gangs.

The crisis escalated in the chaos after the 2021 assassination of President Jovenel Moise. Haiti's prime minister is viewed as incompetent, and the country has no functioning Parliament; the terms of the last remaining senators expired in January. Only 13% of the country's workforce labors in the formal sector.

The violence has displaced Haitians within the country and is driving others to flee to the United States.

Haitians who left for South America after a devastating 2010 earthquake headed to the U.S. by the thousands during the pandemic. Haitians who abandoned Chile pointed to challenges such as language barriers, tight visa restrictions and pandemic-related economic declines.

Times staff writer Kate Linthicum contributed to this report.

Should Newsom kinda, sorta run for president?

MARK Z. BARABAK

He ran TV ads taunting Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis and raised billboards in seven states telling women that California would defend their access to abortion.

He lashed out at fellow Democrats for being insufficiently incandescent in their rage over the Supreme Court's impending reversal of Roe vs. Wade. "Where the hell is my party?" Gavin Newsom demanded.

Then, just last week, California's gallivanting governor announced the formation of a nationally focused political action committee, accompanied by all the trappings of a budding White House bid:

A fundraising blitz.

A launch video ablaze with ripped-from-the-headlines imagery, urgent narration by Newsom and a lineup of political villains — Donald Trump, Marjorie Taylor Greene, DeSantis — whom Democrats love to loathe.

Finally, a campaign-style swing, with wife and kids in tow, to meet with Black leaders across the South, the first of a promised series of road trips to places, Newsom declared, "where freedom is most under attack."

All of which seem very much like the actions of someone vying for the presidency, not even three months after Newsom, a mere 55, was inaugurated for his second and final term in Sacramento.

There are still plenty of reasons to doubt that Newsom is waging a flat-out White House bid, not least the fact the incumbent Democrat is evidently preparing his own 2024 campaign launch, with the oft-stated and unqualified support of California's governor.

That said, California voters — the ones paying Newsom's salary with an expectation he would be serving them in the state capital — may wonder, with good cause, what exactly he's up to.

California governors almost invariably see presidential timber when they regard themselves in a mirror. Few can resist the Beltway's beckoning, the blather of political pundits or the blandishment of campaign operatives urging them to run.

Jerry Brown twice sought the presidency while serving as governor. His fellow Democrat Gray Davis was neutered by a voter recall before he had the chance. Republican Arnold Schwarzenegger might have liked to, had he been born a U.S. citizen.

In his 1994 reelection campaign, Gov. Pete Wilson flatly ruled out a run for the White House, then turned around the next year and ran anyway, a broken promise that helped sink the Republican's bid.

Newsom has been equally emphatic in professing "subzero" interest in being president. When asked directly in the one and only gubernatorial debate last fall, Newsom unequivocally pledged he would serve a full four-year term if reelected in November. That was smart.

Whatever his personal desire, Newsom presumably understands it would be suicidal to take on President Biden in a Democratic primary and only somewhat less fraught to challenge Vice President Kamala Harris, the early front-runner for the nomination if the president were to stand aside.

Harris would almost surely face a formidable challenge from Democratic rivals but starts with considerable advantages, not least her position in the White House and a significant base among Black and female voters, the party's muscle and backbone.

Newsom might gladly step in were Harris to stumble during the primary season, but that's highly speculative and conditioned on a number of events occurring between now and then.

What's clear is the governor's ambitions can't be contained by his current occupation. It was the same as San Francisco mayor, when Newsom elbowed his way onto the national stage by issuing same-sex marriage licenses before they won legal sanction.

Yes, Newsom seems to recognize, it may seem as though he's got his eyes on the White House. In fact, he told the Washington Post, he hesitated to create his new political action committee — seeded with $10 million in leftover money from his reelection campaign — because of how it might be misconstrued.

But, Newsom said, the mass shooting last week at a private Christian school in Nashville banished any doubt it was the right thing to do. (And just like that the slick launch video, legal formation of a federal political action committee and multistate travel itinerary suddenly came together.)

It's not as though constituents are clamoring for a Newsom presidency.

In a poll released last month by Quinnipiac University, 7 in 10 California voters said they don't want Newsom to run for president in 2024, a view shared by 54% of Democrats.

That's not surprising. Voters, not unreasonably, want politicians to do the job they were elected to do.

No matter.

The announcement of his new campaign committee garnered the national attention Newsom craves, and the governor's travels will surely elevate his profile further, bulk up his political treasury and forge a countrywide network of connections.

There are other enticements.

"National reporters are going to ask him about Donald Trump and Kevin McCarthy and marriage equality. He's not going to have to deal with pesky questions about legislation or controversial policy matters," said Dan Schnur, a former Republican strategist-turned-independent who teaches political communications at USC and UC Berkeley.

"Any day he's talking about abortion rights or DeSantis instead of housing and homelessness," Schnur dryly noted, "is a good day for him."

How Newsom chooses to spend his spare time, nights and weekends is, of course, his own business.

But if he wants to run for president in, say, 2028 or beyond, Newsom might do better to focus more on the many not-insignificant problems facing him in California, as opposed to waging a kinda-sorta-but-not-really campaign for the White House. Charity, the saying goes, begins at home.

So does most political success.

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Indicting an ex-leader is old news to them

As other democracies charge past presidents with ease, the U.S. is almost unique with its kid glove treatment.

By Tracy Wilkinson

WASHINGTON — The criminal indictment of former President Trump is unprecedented, but only as far as U.S. history goes.

Around the world, numerous former heads of government have ended up in the dock and often behind bars, in democracies young and old.

Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva was inaugurated as president of Brazil on Jan. 1, about three years after he emerged from spending 20 months in prison. He was convicted of money laundering and other corrupt practices during his earlier term as president, from 2003 to 2010.

Not only was a former president prosecuted and sent to jail, but being an ex-con did not prevent him from seeking election again. (Brazil's high court eventually annulled his conviction.)

Around the world, presidents and prime ministers are often removed from office by criminal investigations, or alleged crimes come back to haunt them after they've left office. It is so common that it rarely raises too many eyebrows.

In South Korea, three former presidents have b een convicted of corruption charges — one while in office, who was impeached, and two after leaving office — and sentenced to long prison terms. All were eventually given reduced sentences or pardoned.

In Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu ran for election late last year even though he was on trial for corruption. His party and its coalition partners won, and he is once again prime minister after two previous tenures, from 1996 to 1999 and 2009 to 2021. They are using their power to attempt to change the Israeli judiciary to minimize future accountability, a move that has triggered massive demonstrations throughout the country by angry Israelis who say they are defending democracy.

Does the relative ease with which former chief executives are prosecuted suggest that the wheels of justice and accountability are stronger in other countries? Not necessarily.

Often it is the very weakness of the system and absence of guardrails that allow easy prosecution and removal of leaders.

Peru, with its shaky political system, might hold the world record on this front. Almost every Peruvian president in the last 38 years has been convicted of crimes while in office, faces prosecution or is fighting extradition from another country to avoid having to confront justice.

And yet one of the world's oldest and most stable democracies, France, has also punished alleged wrongdoing at the highest levels of government.

Nicolas Sarkozy, president of France from 2007 to 2012, was repeatedly investigated for a host of corruption charges after he left office. He was convicted in 2021 of tampering with a judicial case to his benefit and sentenced to three years in prison. He denied guilt. Another case opened against the politically conservative but stylistically flamboyant former president in 2013 accused him of having accepted millions of dollars from Libyan dictator Moammar Kadafi to illegally finance his 2007 campaign. Sarkozy also denied those allegations.

It seems the United States is almost unique among democracies in that it treats its former presidents with kid gloves. Other democracies do not afford their leaders the same level of near-immunity that U.S. tradition does. Experts say this is due in part to a U.S. need to invest stability in the viability of its leaders.

However, never before Trump had a chief executive routinely flouted norms.

"We've been very lucky in the U.S. to rarely have presidents who have exhibited such blatant disregard for the law," said Mark Schmitt, director of the political reform program at the New America think tank in Washington.

The exception, he noted, was Nixon, who was forced to resign but pardoned by his successor, Gerald Ford, before any indictments could be handed down.

"We're not so much 'averse to accountability' as lucky, but there may be some features of our system that might help with that, such as the nonpolitical civil service and the nominal independence of agencies such as the Federal Reserve," Schmitt said.

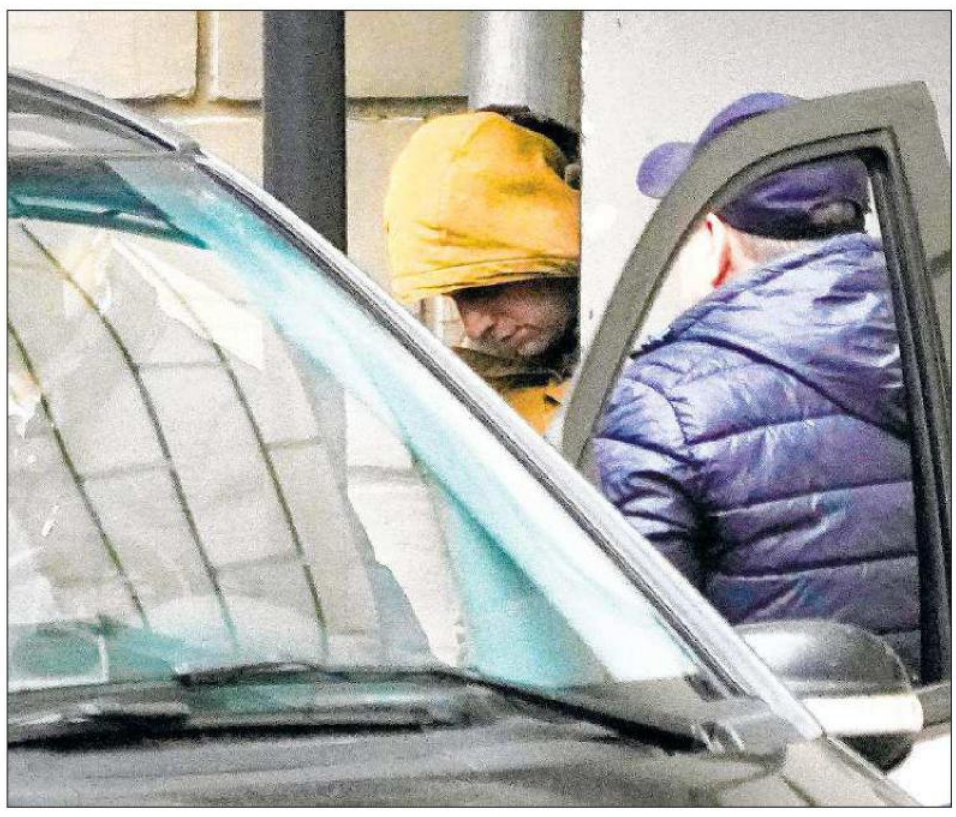
Trump supporters have expressed disbelief at the Manhattan grand jury decision to indict the former president, who was impeached twice while in office.

The former president's allies have maintained that indicting him is "un-American." And in some ways, up until this point, it has been.

Blinken calls on Russia to release reporter

Secretary of State has rare conversation with Moscow counterpart Sergei Lavrov.

By Eric Tucker and Matthew Lee



Alexander Zemlianichenko Associated Press

REPORTER Evan Gershkovich is detained Thursday in Moscow. The State Department has called on Russia to release him, as well as U.S. citizen Paul Whelan.

WASHINGTON — Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken in a phone call has urged his Russian counterpart to immediately release a Wall Street Journal reporter who was detained last week, as well as another imprisoned American, Paul Whelan, the State Department said Sunday. The appeal came in a rare conversation between the diplomats since Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

In the call with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, Blinken conveyed "grave concern" over the Kremlin's detention of journalist Evan Gershkovich on allegations of espionage, according to a State Department summary of the conversation. Blinken called for Gershkovich's immediate release.

Blinken also sought the immediate release of Whelan, who was wrongfully detained, the statement said. U.S. officials said they were considering a similar determination for Gershkovich that could be made at any time. Should that happen, his case will be largely transferred to the office of the U.S. special presidential envoy for hostage affairs.

Whelan, a Michigan corporate security executive, has been imprisoned in Russia since December 2018 on espionage charges that the U.S. government has said are baseless. He is serving a 16-year sentence.

Blinken and Lavrov also discussed "the importance of creating an environment that permits diplomatic missions to carry out their work," according to the State Department.

The FSB, Russia's top security agency and successor to the KGB, alleged that Gershkovich, 31, was collecting information on an enterprise of the military-industrial complex. Russian authorities detained him last week; it is the first time a U.S. correspondent has been held on spying accusations since the Cold War.

In its summary of the phone call, Russia's Foreign Ministry said Lavrov "drew Blinken's attention to the need to respect the decisions of the Russian authorities" about Gershkovich, who "was caught red-handed." Moscow did not provide evidence.

The Wall Street Journal has adamantly denied the allegations and demanded Gershkovich's release. President Biden on Friday told reporters that his message to Russia is "Let him go."

The Kremlin said Lavrov told Blinken it was unacceptable for U.S. officials and Western news media to continue "whipping up excitement" and politicizing the journalist's detention. "His further fate will be determined by the court," the Kremlin said.

Emma Tucker, the Wall Street Journal's editor in chief, said it was "gratifying" and "reassuring" to learn of Blinken's call because it shows that the U.S. government is taking the case "right up to the top." The Journal has been unable to get messages to the reporter or learn any official information about him, she told CBS' "Face the Nation."

U.S. consular officials have requested a visit with Gershkovich, but no announcement of such access has been made. Officials said they were hopeful consular access could be arranged in the coming week but could not speak to when that might happen.

Tucker said she is hopeful that a lawyer might be able to meet with Gershkovich this week; in the meantime, the Journal has been "pressing constantly for reassurance that he's not being mistreated in any way."

Rep. Michael R. Turner (R-Ohio), chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, noted that the U.S. government has advised citizens to leave Russia.

"This is not unexpected, in that Russia is acting as an illegal state at this point. There are no laws or rules or no international norms that they are following," Turner told CNN's "State of the Union."

In alleging that U.S. officials and news media are hyping Gershkovich's detention, Russian officials are reprising a theme they used in the apprehensions of basketball star Brittney Griner and other U.S. citizens. The Kremlin has said it prefers to resolve such cases quietly and has emphasized the need to follow Russia's judicial process. Often, that means there is no chance of progress in U.S. efforts to free detained citizens until formal charges are filed, a trial is held, a conviction is obtained, and sentencing and appeals are completed.

More than 30 news organizations and press freedom advocates have written to the Russian ambassador to the U.S. to express concern that Russia is sending the message that reporting in the country can be criminalized.

Griner, who was detained for 10 months by Russian authorities before being released in a prisoner swap for convicted arms dealer Viktor Bout, on Saturday issued a statement with her wife, Cherelle, calling for the release of Gershkovich.

"Every American who is taken is ours to fight for and every American returned is a win for us all," the couple said in a statement posted on Instagram.

Interactions between the top U.S. and Russian diplomats have been rare since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, though they did have a brief conversation on the sidelines of the Group of 20 conference of foreign ministers last month in India. It was the highest-level in-person talks between the two countries since the war began.

That interaction was their first contact since last summer, when Blinken talked to Lavrov by phone about a U.S. proposal for Russia to release Whelan and Griner.

Though Whelan was not included in the one-for-one swap that resulted in Griner's release, U.S. officials said they remain committed to bringing him home.

Tucker and Lee write for the Associated Press.

Conservatives oust Finland's premier

Associated Press

HELSINKI — Finland's main conservative party claimed victory in a parliamentary election Sunday in an extremely tight three-way race in which right-wing populists took second place, leaving Prime Minister Sanna Marin's Social Democratic Party in third, dashing her hopes for reelection.

The center-right National Coalition Party, or NCP, claimed victory Sunday evening with all of the votes counted, coming out on top at 20.8%. It was followed by right-wing populist party the Finns with 20.1%; the Social Democrats garnered 19.9%.

With the top three parties each getting about 20% of the vote, none is in position to form a government alone. More than 2,400 candidates from 22 parties were vying for the 200 seats in the Nordic country's parliament.

"Based on this result, talks over forming a new government to Finland will be initiated under the leadership of the National Coalition Party," said the party's leader, Petteri Orpo, at a celebration in the capital, Helsinki.

Marin, who at 37 is one of Europe's youngest leaders, received praise for her center-left Cabinet's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic and for her prominent role, along with President Sauli Niinisto, in advocating for Finland's successful application to join NATO.

The 53-year-old Orpo, Finland's former finance minister and likely new prime minister, said the Nordic country's solidarity with Kyiv would remain strong.

"First to Ukraine: We stand by you, with you," he said at the victory event. "We cannot accept this terrible war. And we will do all that is needed to help Ukraine, Ukrainian people, because they fight for us. This is clear.

"And the message to [Russian President Vladimir] Putin is: Go away from Ukraine because you will lose," Orpo said.

Finland, which shares a long border with Russia, cleared the last hurdles to admission into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization last week as alliance members Turkey and Hungary signed off on the country's membership bid.

The NCP's share of votes translates into 48 seats in the Eduskunta, Finland's parliament, while the Finns, a nationalist party running largely on an anti-immigration and anti-European Union agenda, is to get 46 seats. Marin's Social Democrats will have 43.

Observers say the result means a power shift in Finland's political scene as the nation is now likely to get a new center-right government with nationalist tones.

"You know what is important for us?" Orpo said. "It's that we are an active member of the European Union. We build up NATO-Finland, and we fix our economy. We boost our economic growth and create new jobs."

Silicon Valley Bank is now a division of First Citizens Bank

The California Department of Financial Protection and Innovation closed Silicon Valley Bank of Santa Clara, CA, on March 10, 2023, and appointed the FDIC as receiver. Afterward, the FDIC transferred all deposits of the former Silicon Valley Bank to Silicon Valley Bridge Bank, N.A., operated by the FDIC. On March 27, 2023, Silicon Valley Bridge Bank, N.A. was closed by the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency, and the FDIC was appointed as receiver. First Citizens Bank then entered into an agreement with the FDIC to purchase out of FDIC receivership substantially all loans and certain other assets and assume all customer deposits and certain other liabilities of Silicon Valley Bridge Bank.

SVB clients should bank as they normally do at their current Silicon Valley Bank branch. They can continue to use their checks and cards and will still have online access to their accounts. Customer deposits are safe, accessible and still protected by FDIC insurance up to applicable limits. First Citizens Bank operates branches in 23 states. Founded in 1898, First Citizens Bank is a wholly owned subsidiary of First Citizens BancShares, Inc., which has more than $219 billion in assets.

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Cafe explosion kills Russian military blogger

ASSOCIATED PRESS

ST. PETERSBURG, Russia — An explosion tore through a cafe in Russia's second-largest city on Sunday, killing a well-known military blogger and strident supporter of the war on Ukraine. Some reports said a bomb was embedded in a bust of the blogger that was given to him as a gift.

Russian officials said Vladlen Tatarsky was killed as he was leading a discussion at the cafe in the historic heart of St. Petersburg. Some 30 people were wounded in the blast, Russia's Health Ministry reported.

Russian media and military bloggers said Tatarsky was meeting with members of the public when a woman presented him with a box containing the bust that apparently blew up. A Russian patriot group that organized the event said it had taken security precautions but acknowledged that the measures "proved insufficient."

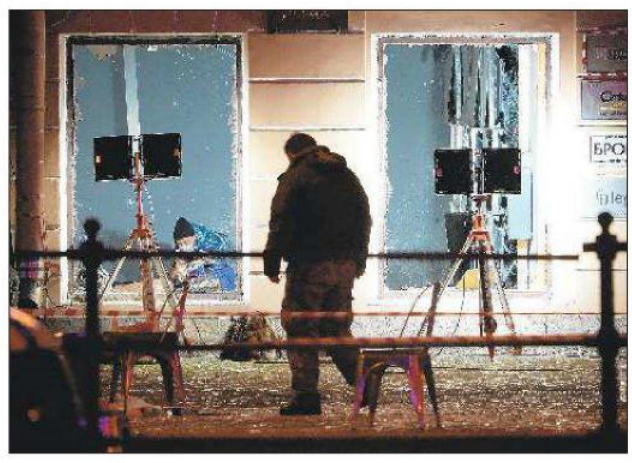
In remarks recorded on video, a witness said a woman who identified herself as Nastya exchanged remarks with Tatarsky during the discussion.

The witness, Alisa Smotrova, quoted Nastya as saying she had made a bust of the blogger, but guards had asked her to leave it at the door, suspecting it could be a bomb. Nastya and Tatarsky laughed. She then went to the door, grabbed the bust and presented it to him. He reportedly put it on a table; the explosion followed.

Russia's Interfax news agency reported that a St. Petersburg woman, Darya Tryopova, was arrested on suspicion of involvement in the bombing. Interfax said she had been detained before for taking part in anti-war rallies.

Russian media said investigators were looking at the bust as the possible source of the blast but have not ruled out the possibility that an explosive device was planted in the cafe before the event.

No one has claimed responsibility, but military bloggers and patriotic commentators pointed at Ukraine and compared the bombing to the killing in August of Darya Dugina, a nationalist TV commentator. She was killed when a remotely controlled explosive device that had been planted in her SUV blew up as she was driving on the outskirts of Moscow. Russian authorities blamed Ukraine's military intelligence for Dugina's death; Kyiv denied involvement.



Associated Press

INVESTIGATORS study the blast site in St. Petersburg, Russia. No one has claimed responsibility.

Reacting to the latest incident, Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said Tatarsky's activities "have won him the hatred of the Kyiv regime" and noted that he and other Russian military bloggers have faced Ukrainian threats.

Since the fighting began Feb. 24, 2022, Ukrainian authorities have refrained from claiming responsibility for fires, explosions and apparent assassinations in Russia. At the same time, officials in Kyiv have jubilantly greeted such events and insisted on Ukraine's right to launch attacks in Russia.

A top Ukrainian government official cast Sunday's explosion as internal turmoil, suggesting that Russian opposition to the war was behind the blast.

"Spiders are eating each other in a jar," Mykhailo Podolyak, a Ukrainian presidential advisor, tweeted in English. "Question of when domestic terrorism would become an instrument of internal political fight was a matter of time."

Tatarsky was the pen name for Maxim Fomin, who had filed regular reports from Ukraine since the start of the war and had accumulated more than 560,000 followers on his Telegram channel.

He was known for his blustery pronouncements and ardent pro-war rhetoric.

Providing abortions via ship, drone, phone

[**Abortion,** from A1]
battle against ever-tightening abortion restrictions in the United States.

"Everywhere in the world, it doesn't matter where, when abortion is banned, women will still have abortions," she said in an interview in her Amsterdam office, a spartan but sunny space in a onetime factory district turned arts hub. "This is something that cannot be stopped."

Gomperts' pathway to all-out advocacy work was a circuitous one. While still a medical student, she attended art-school night classes and contemplated an artistic career. She wrote a novel. She worked as an abortion provider — but also as a medical team member for the environmental group Greenpeace, whose in-your-face tactics helped shape her views on how to foment social change.

Intense-eyed and fast-talking, clad on a recent day in a long black overcoat and trademark white sneakers, Gomperts described the sometimes-quixotic efforts of Women on Waves, the group she founded in 1999, to provide abortions aboard ships in international waters off the shores of countries including Ireland, Poland and Portugal where the practice was outlawed.

The number of patients actually treated was far outstripped by need, but Gomperts came to realize that employing eye-catching methods — breaking silence and taboos — could lead to changes in attitudes.

"In some places it did work; other places, it took a little longer," she said. "You have to see what are the opportunities, the possibilities."

Johan Ordonez AFP/Getty Images

REBECCA GOMPERTS, seen in 2017, founded three groups that broaden abortion access worldwide.

By 2005, twin innovations had transformed the landscape surrounding abortion: broad availability of the internet, and the abortion pills mifepristone and misoprostol, generally used in combination, coming into wide use in Western Europe and the United States. Building on the still-existing Women on Waves, Gomperts' new group, Women on Web, in 2005 began providing online medical abortion assistance worldwide, connecting patients with clinicians who would prescribe abortion pills.

At that point, the United States wasn't really on her radar. But by 2018, amid a polarized political climate under the Trump administration and a darkening abortion-rights picture, Gomperts founded yet another sister organization, Aid Access, focusing on the needs of U.S. patients unable to cope with state restrictions, or high costs, or both. Then, in June 2022, came the Supreme Court ruling striking down the constitutional right to abortion. U.S. demand for the group's services soared.

At this fraught moment in the American abortion fight, the group's mission — early, safe, medication-based terminations at home — puts Gomperts in the crosshairs of antiabortion organizations in the U.S., some of them frustrated that she and Aid Access, based in Austria, are legally out of reach. The group Students for Life called Gomperts an "international criminal."

"Abortion activists are playing a dangerous game with the lives of women and girls," Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of Susan B. Anthony Pro-Life America, said in a statement in response to a query about the activities of Aid Access. "Mail-order abortions put the abortion industry's agenda over the needs of the woman."

Groups seeking to quash use of abortion pills call them a dire safety hazard, although the World Health Organization has described first-trimester medication abortion, under the right circumstances, as a quality method of care. The Food and Drug Administration approved mifepristone in 2000 for use in combination with misoprostol as a safe and effective way to end early pregnancies.

A closely watched lawsuit in Texas, filed in November on behalf of several anti-abortion groups and medical professionals, alleges that mifepristone is not safe for use in medication abortion. The federal judge hearing the case worked for a Christian conservative nonprofit group and had criticized Roe vs. Wade, the Supreme Court ruling that for nearly 50 years had guaranteed a federal constitutional right to abortion.

About 54% of U.S. abortions rely on the two-drug combination. Although use of abortion pills, including through telehealth, had become commonplace over the previous decade, an FDA rule finalized this year formally allows patients to get medication by mail after a telemedicine appointment with a certified provider.

Even so, set against the current political backdrop, Gomperts' efforts carry more than a hint of transgressiveness. Ushma Upadhyay, a professor in the department of obstetrics, gynecology and reproductive services at UC San Francisco, called her an inspiration.

"She is bold and brave and exactly what the U.S. needs in this public health crisis," Upadhyay wrote in an email. "I often wonder why the U.S. doesn't have our own Rebecca Gompertses yet ... who publicly and proudly provide this essential care."

Demand from within the U.S. for Aid Access' services nearly tripled in the wake of the Supreme Court ruling, said Abigail Aiken, an associate professor of public health at the University of Texas at Austin, who researches the availability of abortion care.

In the last quarter of 2022, average daily requests from U.S. patients to the group for self-managed medication abortions rose to 243, compared with 83 per day in the period just before the court decision, according to Aiken and others' published research. Demand increased in all U.S. states, she said, but the largest increases were in states that enacted total or near-total abortion bans.

> 'She is bold and brave and exactly what the U.S. needs.'
>
> — Ushma Upadhyay, UC San Francisco professor, referring to Gomperts

Aid Access operates around the clock with a far-flung staff of 30 people fielding about 1,000 emails and online requests a day from around the world, Gomperts said. The group's model is straightforward: In the U.S., in states where abortion is legal, patients are matched with doctors who, following a consultation, write a prescription for abortion pills, which participating pharmacies ship to the person's home.

In states where abortion is outlawed, Gomperts steps in, using her Austrian medical license to write prescriptions that are filled in India, a major pharmaceutical exporter, and sent to patients in unmarked parcels.

"Texas," she said. "So many from Texas."

While similar online platforms exist, some of them for-profit operations, Aid Access, in addition to being overseas-based, sets itself apart by offering consultation with clinicians throughout the process. And powered by donations from individuals as well as philanthropic organizations, the group charges about $150 for those who can afford it — about a quarter of the cost for a surgical abortion — and no one is turned away for lack of funds.

Gomperts is well aware that online censorship and court rulings have the potential to complicate the work of groups like hers — but not, she says, to halt it.

U.S. providers working with the group, though, are apprehensive not only about the pending Texas ruling on abortion pills, but other court cases and state laws.

Linda Prine, a 71-year-old physician in New York state, has retired from her family-medicine practice but continues to work with Aid Access because she believes that older practitioners, who have the bulk of their careers behind them, are more able to risk their medical licenses than younger ones. She said she thought the group could continue its work even in the event of an adverse court ruling in Texas, "but there are differences of opinion about the reach of this."

Researchers point to a backdrop of ongoing legal uncertainty.

"State laws that ban or restrict abortion apply to medication abortion just as they apply to abortion procedures," the Kaiser Family Foundation wrote in a fact sheet on its website. Even before the Supreme Court ruling, "some states restricted access to medication abortion either by blocking the use of telehealth abortions by mandating in-person visits for abortions, imposing requirements for in-person dispensing, or limiting the kinds of clinicians who could dispense the pills."

At her Amsterdam office, Gomperts still sees patients one day a week — primarily foreign students and undocumented people who cannot access Dutch government benefits for abortion care. For her, the work underscores what she considers the basic inequalities that underpin abortion restrictions worldwide.

"People with money, the wives and daughters of judges and politicians, they can obtain abortions no matter what," she said. "It's fundamentally racist, and a matter of social injustice. That's the bottom line."

Online and in person, patients often tell her of circumstances — poverty, domestic abuse, a disintegrating marriage — that make it difficult or impossible to obtain an abortion. But she feels strongly that abortion access should not be contingent on such hardships.

"I don't need a horror story to justify it, and I don't want anyone to need a horror story," she said. "Being forced to continue an unwanted pregnancy is a violation of fundamental rights."

Gomperts devotes considerable time to research and advocacy aimed at two major goals: abortion pills becoming available without a prescription — she argues that their safety profile is far superior to that of many over-the-counter drugs including painkillers — and the potential use, in lower doses, of mifepristone as a contraceptive.

And if there is a return to the edgier tactics she employed earlier in her activist career, Gomperts — without giving details — is ready for that as well.

"Nobody's going to be stopped any more," she said. "Ever."

Ukraine planning to reclaim occupied Crimea

ASSOCIATED PRESS

KYIV, Ukraine — A top Ukrainian official Sunday outlined a series of steps the government in Kyiv would take after the country reclaims control of Crimea, including dismantling the strategic bridge that links the illegally seized Black Sea peninsula to Russia.

Oleksiy Danilov, secretary of Ukraine's National Security and Defense Council, published the plan as Ukraine's military prepares for a spring counteroffensive in hopes of making new, decisive gains after more than 13 months of war to end Russia's full-scale invasion.

Moscow annexed Crimea from Ukraine in 2014, but most of the world does not recognize it as Russian territory. The peninsula's future status will be a key feature in any negotiations on ending the current fighting.

The Kremlin has demanded that Ukraine recognize Russia's sovereignty over Crimea and acknowledge other land gains made by Moscow as a condition for peace.

Kyiv has ruled out peace talks until Russian troops leave all occupied territories, including Crimea.

Danilov suggested prosecuting Ukrainians who worked for the Moscow-appointed administration in Crimea.

All Russian citizens who moved to Crimea after 2014 should be expelled, and all real estate deals made under Russian rule nullified, he wrote on Facebook.

As part of the plan, Danilov also called for dismantling a 12-mile bridge that Russia built to Crimea. In October, a truck bomb severely damaged the span, which is Europe's longest and a symbol of Moscow's conquest of the peninsula.

Russia has repaired the damage and restored the flow of supplies to Crimea, which has served as a key hub for Moscow's forces during the war. Kyiv did not claim responsibility for the bomb, but Ukrainian officials had repeatedly threatened to strike the bridge.

Danilov also argued for renaming the city of Sevastopol, which has been the main base for the Russian Black Sea fleet since the 19th century.

The Moscow-appointed head of Sevastopol, Mikhail Razvozhayev, shrugged off Danilov's plan.

"It would be wrong to seriously treat comments by sick people. They must be cured, and that's what our military is doing now," Razvozhayev told the Russian state news agency Tass.

Danilov published his plan as Ukrainian troops prepared to use newly supplied Western weapons, including dozens of battle tanks, to break through Russian defenses and reclaim occupied areas in a counteroffensive expected as early as this month.

Russian troops are trying to capture the key Ukrainian stronghold of Bakhmut as part of their efforts to take all of Donetsk province, which is part of the Donbas, Ukraine's eastern industrial heartland.

Russia's latest rocket and artillery attacks have killed four civilians and wounded 15 others since Saturday, according to the Ukrainian military. The victims included two men who died in the northern region of Sumy early Sunday when a milk truck was hit.

Ukrainian authorities reported that Russian shelling killed an additional six civilians later Sunday in Kostiantynivka, a small city in Donetsk province.

In Russian-occupied Melitopol, the Moscow-installed administration said a Ukrainian rocket barrage Sunday struck a locomotive depot and damaged an apartment building in the southern city, wounding six civilians.

Ukrainian officials didn't take direct responsibility for that attack. But the city's Kyiv-appointed mayor, Ivan Fedorov, jubilantly referred to blasts at the locomotive depot as a culmination of an "explosive week for the occupiers" that featured other hits over the last few days.

FOR THE RECORD

Welcome rains: In the April 1 Section A, an article on where California's wet winter has brought welcome recovery said nearly three dozen vertebrate species rely on oak habitats. That figure represents species listed or considered candidates for listing as endangered or threatened. Overall, more than 300 native vertebrate species rely on oak habitats.

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ANNE HATHAWAY FOR VERSACE

ANALYSIS

Former president's dream city turns back on him

By Matt Sedensky

NEW YORK — His name has been plastered on this city's tabloids, bolted to its buildings and cemented to a special breed of brash New York confidence. Now, with Donald Trump due to return to the place that put him on the map, the city he loved is poised to deliver his comeuppance.

Rejected by its voters, ostracized by its protesters and now rebuked by its jurors, Trump has given the people of New York one more thing on which to splash his name: Indictment No. 71543-23.

"He wanted to be in Manhattan. He loved Manhattan. He had a connection to Manhattan," says Barbara Res, a longtime employee of the former president who was a vice president at the Trump Organization. "I don't know that he has accepted it and I don't know that he believes it, but New York turned on him."

None of Trump's romances have lasted longer than his courtship of New York. No place else could match his blend of ostentatious and outlandish. His love of the city going unrequited is Shakespearean enough, but Trump took it a step further, rising to the presidency only to become a hometown antihero.

Trump was born and raised in Queens to a real estate developer father whose projects were largely in Queens and Brooklyn. But the younger Trump ached to cross the East River and make his name in Manhattan. He gained a foothold with his transformation of the rundown Commodore Hotel into a glittering Grand Hyatt and ensured a spotlight on himself by appearing at the side of politicians and celebrities, popping up at Studio 54 and coaxing near-constant media coverage.

By the greed-is-good 1980s, he was a New York fixture. And in a city that prides itself as the center of the world, Trump saw himself as king.

"Trump grew up with a great deal of resentment toward others who he thought had more fame, wealth or popularity," says David Greenberg, a Rutgers University professor who wrote "Republic of Spin: An Inside History of the American Presidency." "Making it in Manhattan — building Trump Tower and becoming a fixture of the Manhattan social scene in the 1980s — meant a lot to him."

The feeling was never truly mutual. Trump left a trail of unpaid bills, jilted workers and everyday New Yorkers who saw through his shameless self-promotion.

He may have been a singular character, but in a city of 8 million stories, his was just another one.

So, for years,Trump's life here continued as the city raced on around him. Marriages came and went. Skyscrapers rose. Bankruptcies were filed. Trump flickered in and out of fame's upper echelon.

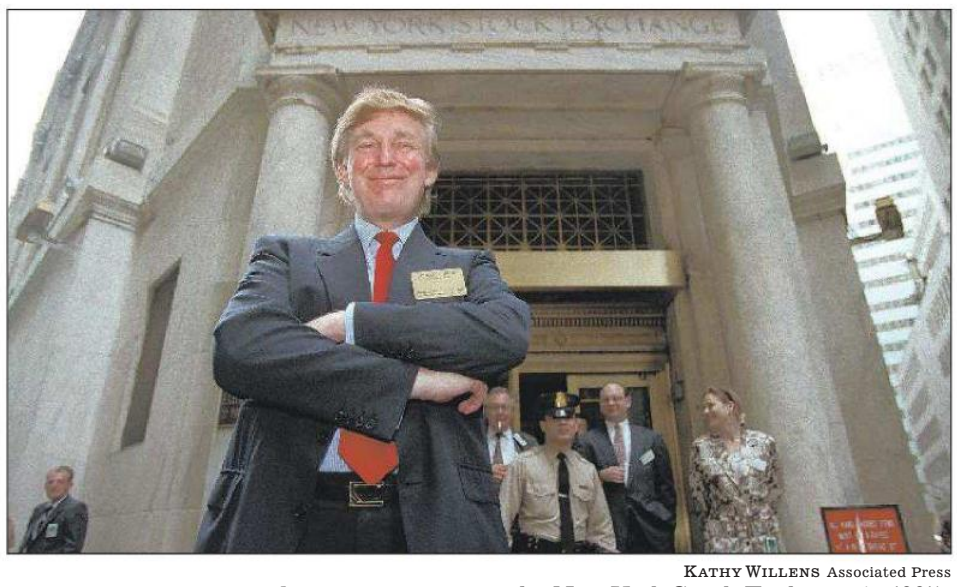
He may never have been a common New Yorker, but for many he remained a benign, if outsize, presence.

That began changing with years of bizarre lies about President Obama's birthplace, and by the time Trump descended the golden escalator at Trump Tower on June 16, 2015, to announce his presidential bid, many in his hometown had little patience for his vitriol.

Rockefeller Center played host to a weekly "Saturday Night Live" that made him a mockery, and at a Waldorf-Astoria gala, he elicited groans.

Even among Republicans, many saw him as believable as a Gucci bag on Canal Street. Trump won the state's Republican primary, but couldn't convince GOP voters in Manhattan.

"He's no longer just this TV show charlatan. People see this man is actually going to lead the country and the world in the wrong direction," says Christina Greer, a political scientist at Fordham University.



Kathy Willens Associated Press

DONALD TRUMP made an appearance at the New York Stock Exchange in 1995.

On election night 2016, tears flowed at the Javits Center, where Hillary Clinton's victory party never materialized, while giddy supporters of Trump reveled in his surprise win across town in a Hilton ballroom. New Yorkers' rebuke of their native son meant nothing. His face was projected onto the face of the Empire State Building as locals digested the fact that he would be president.

In the days that followed, a curious parade of politicians and celebrities journeyed to Trump Tower to meet the president-elect and, for weeks after, predictions about his presidency were rampant.

Among the musings of observers was speculation of a commuter president shuttling between New York and Washington. When word emerged that his wife and young son wouldn't immediately move to the White House, it gave credence to the idea that Trump could never fully part with the city that made him.

But Trump continued being Trump, his presidency gave way to controversies and broken norms, and New York became a capital of the resistance, giving birth to persistent mass protests.

The city of his dreams was no longer a place he could call home.

"New York has gone to hell," he said as election day 2020 neared.

When the ballots were counted, Manhattan had seven times as many supporters of Joe Biden than those for Trump, and this time the electoral college followed. When Trump's presidency ended and he left Washington after the violent insurrection he incited, it was clear New York would be inhospitable.

Like droves of New Yorkers before him, he retired to Florida.

When he returns north now, he spends most of his time at his club in Bedminster, N.J. The man who long tried to eschew his bridge-and-tunnel past is again separated from Manhattan by a river.

On his first return to Manhattan after leaving office, the New York Post reported that one person waited outside Trump Tower to catch a glimpse. Even protesters couldn't be bothered with him anymore.

His rebuke came from New Yorkers taking part in a rite of passage for city dwellers: jury duty; and if it fit the mold of prior grand juries, it brought together a quintessential Manhattan cross-section, from neighborhoods, incomes and backgrounds different enough to ensure a cast of characters fit for TV.

With word of Trump's indictment, the story of his deteriorating romance with New York is gaining a sense of finality. Even the Post, part of the Rupert Murdoch media empire that helped Trump win the White House to begin with, has abandoned him. The paper that once documented his affair with a screaming "Best Sex I've Ever Had" headline beside Trump's smirking face, last month called him "deranged" on a front page on which he was branded "Bat Hit Crazy" in huge letters.

Trump once bragged he could shoot someone in the middle of Fifth Avenue and remain popular. Today, he could hand out $50 bills in New York and still not win the support of most locals.

He has dismissed the grand jury's actions as a "scam" and a "persecution" and denied he did anything wrong. Democrats, he says, are lying and cheating to hurt his campaign to return to the White House.

Outside the courthouse that awaits him, the spectacle has largely been confined to the hordes of media. Among the few regular New Yorkers to make the trip there was Marni Halasa, a figure skater who showed up in a leopard print leotard, cat ears and wads of fake bills strung into a "hush money" boa. She stood alone outside Friday to celebrate the indictment of one of her city's most famous sons.

"New Yorkers are here in spirit," she says, "and I feel like I'm representing most of them."

Sedensky writes for the Associated Press.

Asa Hutchinson enters GOP race, urges Trump to bow out

By Andrew DeMillo

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. — Asa Hutchinson, who recently completed two terms as governor of Arkansas, said Sunday that he will seek the Republican presidential nomination, positioning himself as an alternative to Donald Trump just days after the former president was indicted by a grand jury in New York.

Hutchinson said Trump should drop out of the race, arguing "the office is more important than any individual person."

Hutchinson, 72, who announced his candidacy on ABC's "This Week," said he was running because "I believe that I am the right time for America, the right candidate for our country and its future.

"I'm convinced that people want leaders that appeal to the best of America and not simply appeal to our worst instincts."

He is the first Republican to announce a campaign since Trump became the first former U.S. president to face criminal charges. His candidacy will test the GOP's appetite for those who speak out against Trump. Others who have criticized Trump, including former Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan, have opted against a campaign, sensing the difficulty of prevailing in a primary.

Hutchinson, in an Associated Press interview later Sunday, said it was important for voters to have an alternative leader and "not simply go by default to somebody who is really wrapped around what happened in the past."

"I don't think you have to be blustery. I think you can be honest and authentic, and that's what I want to be able to offer," he said.

In a sign of Trump's continued grip on the Republican base, most in the party — even those considering challenging him for the nomination — have defended him against the New York indictment. That, at least for now, leaves Hutchinson as a distinct outlier among Republicans.

Pablo Martinez Monsivais AP

ASA HUTCHINSON is positioning himself as an alternative to Trump.

Besides Trump, Hutchinson joins a GOP field that also includes former Ambassador to the United Nations Nikki Haley and entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy. Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis is expected to jump into the race in the summer, while U.S. Sen. Tim Scott of South Carolina, former Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo and former Vice President Mike Pence are among those considering bids.

The formal campaign announcement will come April 26 in Bentonville, Hutchinson's hometown and also the home of Walmart's headquarters. He will be campaigning in the coming weeks in Iowa, Indiana and Kentucky.

He said he could be very competitive in places like Iowa, where campaigning involves "retail politics" such as chatting with potential voters in diners. He also said he believed he would be financially competitive, though "certainly it's not going to be at the level of the Donald Trumps of the world."

Hutchinson left office in January after eight years as governor. He has ramped up his criticism of the former president in recent months, calling another Trump presidential nomination the "worst scenario" for Republicans and saying it would probably benefit President Biden's chances in 2024.

The former governor, who was term-limited, has been a fixture in Arkansas politics since the 1980s, when the state was predominantly Democratic. A former congressman, he was one of the House managers prosecuting the impeachment case against President Clinton.

Hutchinson served as President George W. Bush's head of the Drug Enforcement Administration and was an undersecretary of the Department of Homeland Security.

As governor, Hutchinson championed a series of income tax cuts as the state's budget surpluses grew. He signed several abortion restrictions into law, including a ban on the procedure that took effect when the U.S. Supreme Court struck down Roe vs. Wade last year. Hutchinson, however, has said he regretted that the measure did not include exceptions for rape or incest.

Hutchinson earned the ire of Trump and social conservatives last year when he vetoed legislation banning gender-affirming medical care for children. Arkansas' majority-Republican Legislature overrode the veto and enacted the ban, which has been temporarily blocked by a federal judge.

Trump called Hutchinson a "RINO" — a Republican In Name Only — for the veto.

Hutchinson's successor, former White House Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders, has said she would have signed the legislation. Since taking office, she's signed legislation aimed at reinstating the ban by making it easier to sue providers of such care to minors.

Hutchinson, who endorsed Sanders and signed other restrictions on transgender youth into law, said he would have signed the ban if it had focused only on surgery.

Although he has supported Trump's policies, Hutchinson has become increasingly critical of the former president's lies about the 2020 presidential election. He said Trump's call to terminate parts of the Constitution to overturn the election hurt the country.

DeMillo writes for the Associated Press.

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Will sludge taint Tulare Lake's floodwaters?

[**Tulare Lake,** from A1] nearby puddles of black water because of the waste," he said.

"If floodwaters carrying cow waste arrive near vulnerable communities, it is very possible that domestic wells are contaminated with such pathogens as *E. coli*. That can make water immediately toxic unless their water system has a disinfection treatment," he said.

During a recent visit to the sprawling L.A. County Sanitation facility in Kettleman City, the faint odor of ammonia hung in the air as site engineer Carl Glass described flood defenses.

"We designed this facility to withstand a 100-year, 24-hour storm," Glass said. "In simple numbers, that flood was predicted to raise the water level, locally, by 3½ feet."

The site, however, sits 5 feet above native elevation and possesses three bermed stormwater basins lined with concrete to collect runoff from the facility. Four additional unlined basins are available to provide protection as well, Glass noted.

"Any water that falls on the site is captured and stays on-site," he said. Floods of the 1960s and '70s "didn't come anywhere near" the facility or the surrounding acres of farmland, he said. Still, the facility is developing a flood protection plan, ordering sandbags and identifying critical infrastructure, Glass said, "since nobody knows what the melting of the snowpack is going to entail."

State and local officials are hopeful the region will be spared drastic flooding. If the spring stays cool, they say, and the snowpack in the mountains — which in some places is nearly 300% of its average depth — melts slowly, water managers are hoping they can get ahead of any major flooding.

"I think what we're all hoping for at this point is that it melts gradually," said Antoinette Serrato, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service in Hanford. "If it melts gradually, then most of the levees are designed to be able to hold that."

However, "if it melts all at once or if it melts really quickly, that's when we would maybe have" an issue, she said.

Once the largest body of freshwater west of the Mississippi, Tulare Lake was drained — its waters siphoned and diverted by farmers — at the end of the 19th century. Where once a wetland of reeds, birds, fish and amphibians thrived, there are now dairy farms, human waste sites and farm fields operating on the bottom of the desiccated lake.

But a series of winter storms has already started refilling the lake, which straddles Kings and Tulare counties, causing residents to evacuate and flooding croplands and ranches.

Officials in both counties say they are bracing for the worst.

"We're actively preplanning our [California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection] crews along with our law enforcement," said Carrie Montero, public information officer for Tulare County. She said the county is working with state and federal agencies "to shore up and do as much fixes of the levees and the channel systems" as it can before the melt.

Local irrigation and flood districts — the messy network of private landowners that oversees much of the levee system in the area — are also "actively cleaning out debris, rebuilding and repairing levees, and raising levees in preparation for the incoming" water, she said.

Doug Verboon, a Kings County supervisor, said he has been working closely with Tulare Lake Compost amid larger flood preparations.

"We're gonna hope the snow doesn't come till the end of May, first of June," Verboon said. "We need to fix a lot of levees and prepare for that ... we need to prepare for all the snowmelt because we got so much snow up the hills. We might not be able to handle it, but we're doing our best."

Bryan Langpap, spokesman for the compost site, said he is confident it won't flood.

"I think where we have concern down the road is later in the spring when it starts to really warm up and the snow starts to melt," he said. "What happens then? I think at this point we don't know. I think at this point it's speculation to consider how quickly it runs off or what the flow levels are."

He said, in any case, the compost is cooked at a high temperature to kill pathogens such as bacteria and viruses.

"The thing you may not realize is that the compost that we produce at our site is called exceptional quality compost," he said. It is "compost that's so clean it can be used to grow any crop. ... So there's not hazardous material there."

Clay Rodgers, assistant executive officer at the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board, agreed.

"If the material is composted, then we don't have the bacteriological issues because that's what the composting does — it kills the bacteria," he said. So "while they are a significant concern of ours, probably not quite as much as some of the dairies or even poultry facilities that we have in the valley."

There are 340 dairies in Kings and Tulare counties, according to Michael Payne, a researcher and outreach coordinator at the UC Davis School of Veterinary Medicine's Western Institute of Food Safety and Security, many of which collect and hold manure in lagoons and ponds that is then converted into compost for nearby fields.

Michael Claiborne, directing attorney for Leadership Counsel for Justice and Accountability, said if floodwaters wash away manure lagoons, there is concern that nitrates could seep into groundwater.

The historical lake bed is surrounded by multiple communities, he said, noting Allensworth, Stratford and Corcoran. "They're all reliant on groundwater for their drinking water supplies. So if you end up moving that dairy manure and the floodwaters toward those groundwater wells, you might have a really significant problem as that nitrate seeps into the soil and into the groundwater."

But state water managers say if the fields and farms of the lake bed do flood, there is so much water moving through the system that any toxic chemicals or contaminants will be diluted and unlikely to pose much harm.

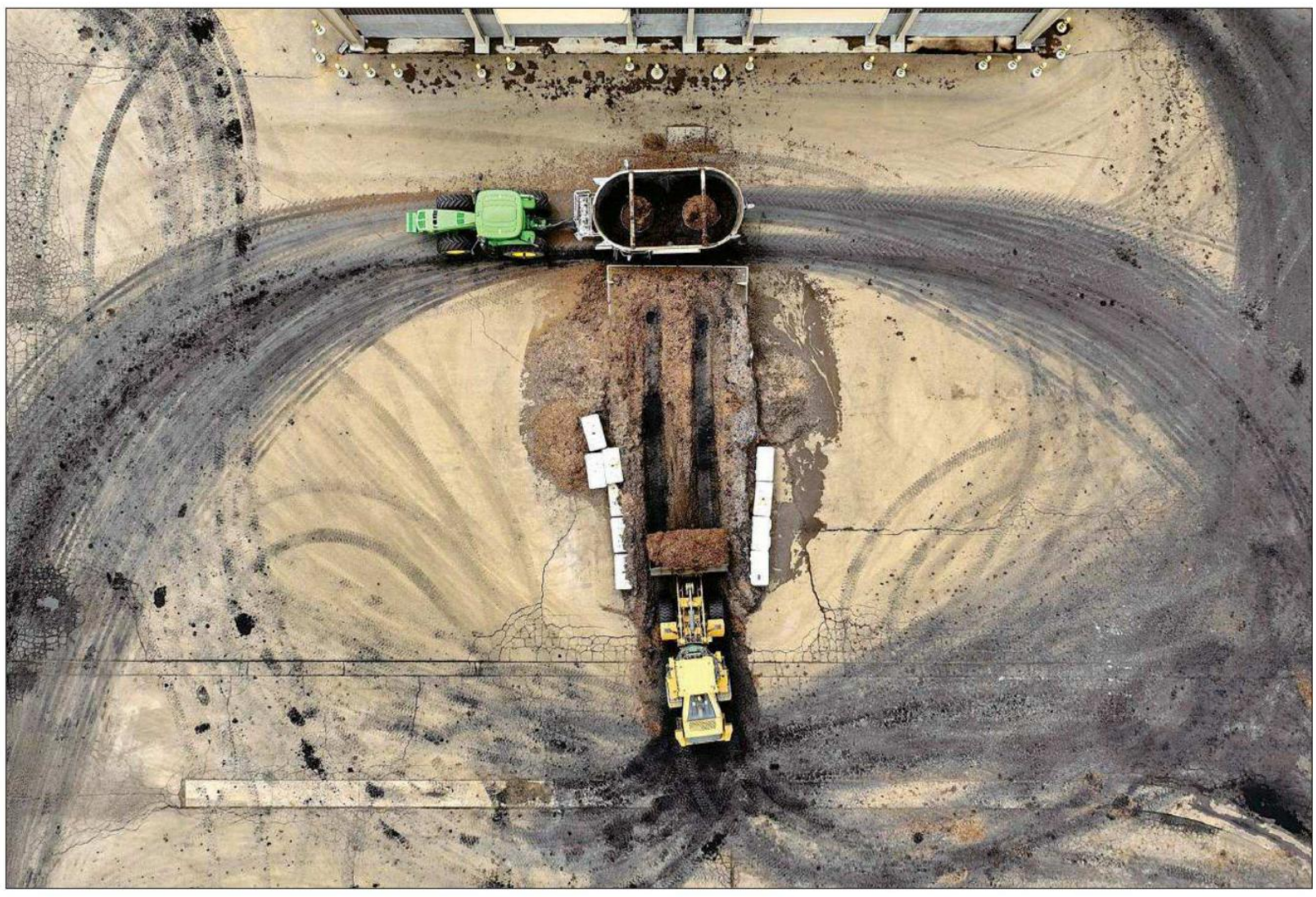
"Dilution is the solution," Rodgers said, adding that his agency is tracking the flooding via satellite — in many cases, they are unable to get in because of flooded roads.

"Probably the greatest threat we see is to surface water," he said. Although some surface water is used for drinking water, he said, most of that supply comes from groundwater in the area.

But the surface water is where people play.

"Granted this time of year, with the cool temperatures ... we don't have children out swimming in the creeks or families going down for a picnic and getting in the water," he said.

"But that's what our standards are designed to protect" — municipal supplies and recreational activities, as well as the fish "and other animals that depend upon that water."



Photographs by ROBERT GAUTHIER Los Angeles Times

MATERIALS are transported at Tulare Lake Compost, a plant that converts Southland sewage sludge into high-grade organic fertilizer.

RICHARD KISH, facility superintendent at Tulare Lake Compost, digs for some processed compost.

> 'The thing you may not realize is that the compost that we produce at our site is called exceptional quality compost.'
>
> — BRYAN LANGPAP, spokesman for Tulare Lake Compost

BEE SHEDS stand partially submerged amid farm fields just south of Tulare River Road in Corcoran, Calif.

U.S. Navy deploys more chaplains for suicide prevention

ASSOCIATED PRESS

NAVAL STATION NORFOLK, Va. — On Navy ships docked at this vast base, hundreds of sailors in below-deck mazes of windowless passageways perform intense, often monotonous manual labor. It's necessary work before a ship deploys but hard to adjust to for many already challenged by the stresses that weigh on young adults nationwide.

Growing mental health distress in the ranks carries such grave implications that the U.S. chief of naval operations, Adm. Michael Gilday, answered "suicides" when asked this year what in the security environment kept him up at night.

One recently embraced prevention strategy is to deploy chaplains as regular members of the crew on more ships. The goal is for the clergy to connect with believers and nonbelievers alike in complete confidentiality.

"That makes us accessible as a relief valve," said Capt. David Thames, an Episcopal priest responsible for chaplains for the Navy's surface fleet in the Atlantic, covering dozens of ships from the East Coast to Bahrain.

The families of two young men who killed themselves in Norfolk said chaplains could be effective to facilitate access to care. But they also insist on accountability and a chain of command committed to eliminating bullying and engaging younger generations.

"A chaplain could help, but it wouldn't matter if you don't empower them," said Patrick Caserta, a former Navy recruiter whose son, Brandon, 21, killed himself in 2018.

Chaplains, civilian counselors, families and sailors say mental health struggles pose unique challenges in the military, where suicides took the lives of 519 service members in 2021, per the latest Department of Defense data.

Lt. Cmdr. Madison Carter, lead chaplain for a Norfolk-based squad, is working on recruiting three new chaplains who are naval officers and clergy from various denominations.

The Baptist pastor said most of his talks with sailors involve not faith but life struggles that can make them feel unfulfilled.

Sailors can carry the routine angst of young adults, from political polarization to breakups to broken homes.

Onboard, disconnected from their real and virtual networks — most communications are off-limits at sea for security — they lack the usual coping mechanisms, said Jochebed Swilley, a civilian social worker on the USS Bataan, an amphibious assault ship, which when underway carries 1,000 sailors, 1,600 Marines and three other chaplains.

A Navy chaplain's role is akin to a life coach, helping young sailors find their footing as adults in an environment that looks far more different from the civilian world than it did in previous generations.

Lt. Cmdr. Nathan Rice, a Pentecostal chaplain serving a destroyer squadron at Norfolk, estimates he did 7,000 hours of counseling over 12 years. Long lines of sailors waiting to talk often formed outside his door.

"They're grinding on a ship or serving food on a mess line, that's not what they expected. So we help to find their meaning and purpose," Rice said. "When their life is not going the way they think it should be going, I'll be blunt and ask, 'Why haven't you killed yourself?' "

Focusing on the answers — the "anchors" to the sailors' will to survive — has helped Rice talk some down from the ledge, including a corpsman who, while discussing suicidal dreams, suddenly cocked his weapon and told Rice, "I could do it right now."

Suicide profoundly affects surviving families. Kody Decker was 22 and a new father when he killed himself at a maintenance facility in Norfolk, where he was transferred after struggling with depression on the Bataan, according to his father, Robert Decker.

He's not sure whether talking to a chaplain would have made a difference with Kody, though speedy implementation of the Brandon Act might have.

The bill, named after the Casertas' son, aims to improve the process for mental health evaluations for service members.

But Decker hasn't given up on either the Navy or God. "My whole fight," he said, "is about not having other families like us."

Speaker's district is more nuanced on indictment

[**Bakersfield,** from A1]
ed by politics." The same poll, however, found that 57% of those surveyed thought criminal charges should disqualify Trump from running for president again.

That range of views was on display Saturday morning at the F Street Farmers Market near downtown Bakersfield, where vendors and shoppers on opposite ends of the political spectrum bought and sold vegetables, eggs, honey and baked goods.

"I think they're just out to get [Trump], because I think they don't want him in office," said April Verhoef, who manages the market and runs From the Farmhouse, a local farm.

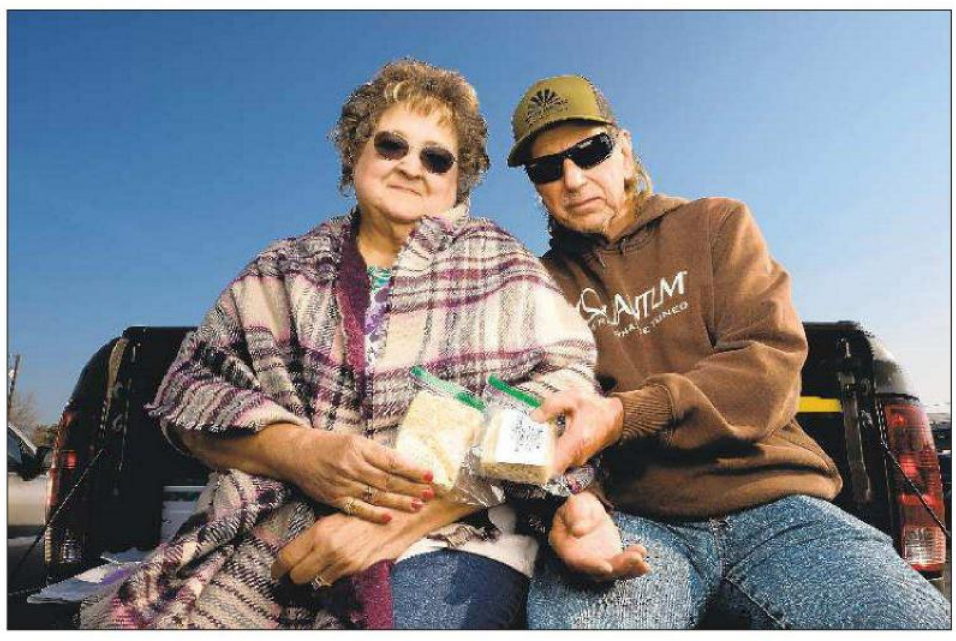
Another vendor, 59-year-old baker Brenda Fallot, said that based on the information she had so far, she thought the investigation into the alleged hush-money payment was "stupid."

"I don't really care that he had an affair with anybody. It's none of our business," said Fallot, a two-time Trump voter who said she has backed presidential candidates in both parties over the last few decades, including former Presidents Clinton and Obama. "And he's not the first president to have done it."

But Margaret Govea, a 60-year-old director of a university student health program who lives in Bakersfield just outside McCarthy's district, said she thought the Trump indictment was "a long time coming." She believes the speaker's longtime support of Trump comes down to ambition.

"He thinks that Trump is a way to get more power, so he's willing to do things to support Trump, thinking that Trump will support him," she said. "And we've seen that that doesn't always happen."

Deborah Saldana, a 48-year-old logistics manager who supports Trump's indictment and described herself as liberal, said the former president's backing doesn't benefit McCarthy. But she acknowledged that the alliance has bolstered



Photographs by Tomas Ovalle For The Times

BRENDA and Jerry Fallot sell goods at Bakersfield's F Street Farmers Market.

'It's none of our business. And he's not the first president to have done it.'

— Brenda Fallot,
who voted for Presidents Trump, Obama and Clinton

MANDIE SELMAN, left, fishing with her niece in Bakersfield, backs House Speaker Kevin McCarthy.

McCarthy's standing among some Bakersfield voters.

"To me, it's not a selling point, but for some people it is," she said. "If you're on that wagon, then you love [Trump]. But for me, I wouldn't want to be endorsed by Trump."

Trump, who is expected to be arraigned Tuesday in New York, became the first former U.S. president to face criminal prosecution after he was indicted Thursday. The exact charges are unknown, but the case is focused on a $130,000 payment former Trump attorney Michael Cohen made to Daniels in an attempt to cover up an alleged affair between the porn actor and former president.

The hush-money case is one of several concurrent investigations into the former president. Two federal inquiries run by special counsel Jack Smith are looking into Trump's handling of classified documents after his presidency and his efforts to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election. In Georgia, Fulton County Dist. Atty. Fani Willis is investigating Trump's efforts to overturn the state's results from that race.

Enrique Garcia, 34, a DJ who lives in a part of Bakersfield that falls within the district of GOP Rep. David Valadao, said it was "disheartening" to have a House speaker from his area who is so closely allied with Trump.

"Once everything came out that was bad with Trump, Kevin McCarthy should have just dropped him," he said.

Garcia added that Trump "should've been in trouble a lot sooner."

"I think it's about time," he said.

Taryn King, a 32-year-old hairstylist from Bakersfield, said she was "surprised" Trump was charged.

"I didn't think it was gonna happen, but I'm happy about it for sure," she said.

Her mother, however, wasn't convinced it needed to happen.

"I am not a Trump supporter. I don't like him for a lot of other reasons," said Charlotte Newman, a 53-year-old program supervisor. "But this is just not necessary. We just need to move forward."

Newman described herself as nonpartisan and stressed that she doesn't support Trump running for or becoming president again. At the same time, she said, the alleged hush-money payment at the center of the indictment is "in the past."

"I feel like, possibly, it's at the point where, is this just a witch hunt?" she said.

Many Republicans are hoping most Americans will see it that way. Trump's argument that investigations into his conduct are an attempt to keep him out of power has resonated with his base, forcing even political rivals such as Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis to defend him. Meanwhile, McCarthy's fate appears inextricably linked with the former president.

As reports of the indictment loomed, McCarthy's loyalty was put to the test yet again as he tried to balance criticizing Bragg and his investigation with tempering Trump's incendiary rhetoric.

After Trump claimed that he would be arrested last month and urged supporters on his Truth Social platform to "PROTEST, TAKE OUR NATION BACK," McCarthy stressed that Trump didn't mean it in a "harmful way."

At the same time, the speaker has called on conservative committee chairmen — including close Trump ally Jim Jordan (R-Ohio), who heads the Judiciary panel — to investigate whether Bragg used federal funds in his investigation. In recent days, Bragg has forcefully defended himself from the chairmen's accusation that his inquiry was politically motivated.

Back in Bakersfield, voters who make up Trump's base — and McCarthy's — want to see the speaker continue to back the former president.

Mandie Selman, a 43-year-old stay-at-home mom who spent Saturday afternoon at a park fishing for trout with her niece, said she's a fan of McCarthy, who she believes has been taking a stand against the policies of the Biden administration.

"I will say he's a better House speaker than he was the representative from California," she said. "He's really stepped up his game to show the American people that he's in it for the American people, and not just a paycheck."

In Selman's view, McCarthy has supported Trump in the past, and is doing so now. She urged him to keep going.

"McCarthy needs to stand up and stand by Trump like he has before," she said. "Don't be pushed over or persuaded."

Marjorie Waclawski, a 72-year-old retired administrative assistant from Bakersfield who was with her grandsons at the park, said "of course" McCarthy should stand by Trump.

"Loyalty is everything," she said. "There are a lot of people who are sitting there defending Trump because they see [the indictment] for what it is, that it's another hoax. It's bunch of trumped up garbage."

The hidden flaw that puts homes at risk in earthquakes

[**Flaw,** from A1]
the Earthquake Engineering Research Institute.

"It's just really serious, and [could result in] hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of damage. It could be a total loss as well," she said.

The risk is similar to that of apartment buildings where carports or garages on the ground floor are held up by weak columns. A number of cities, including Los Angeles and San Francisco, require soft-story apartments to be retrofitted.

Soft-story homes, however, have flown under the radar. They're not subject to mandatory retrofit laws. And a number of single-family, wood-frame homes have withstood California's recent earthquakes reasonably well; they have generally held up if they're firmly attached to the foundation, are well-supported on all sides and don't straddle both sides of a rupturing earthquake fault.

In the magnitude 7.1 Ridgecrest earthquake in 2019, single-story homes with an earthquake-resistant slab foundation that didn't have that "huge, great room where everybody's taken out all the walls actually performed very well," avoiding major structural damage, Maffei said.

In addition, experts have devoted more resources to addressing another seismic defect in single-family homes. That problem involves houses built before 1979 that have a handful of steps above the ground. They are at risk because they're attached to the foundation by a short flimsy wall known as a "cripple wall," which leaves the house vulnerable to snapping off the foundation when shaken. The fix costs about $5,000 in Southern California and $6,000 in Northern California.

There are other suggested retrofits for certain types of single-family houses, such as those built on hillsides or steep slopes and mobile homes.

Another earthquake risk is the collapse of brick chimneys built before 1995, which can kill or seriously injure residents and pets. The safest option for most older chimneys is to demolish all or a portion of the stack, although some can be deemed safe if certain criteria are met, officials say.

The earthquake safety risk in soft-story homes is significant; they can crush people inside a garage. Even if the home's occupants are not hurt, the damage could financially ruin a homeowner.

Retrofitting soft-story homes costs much more than fixing an unbraced "cripple wall": $14,000 to $28,000. But the process has become simpler — and perhaps even a little cheaper recently.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency published pre-engineered retrofit plans in October 2019 that allow many homeowners to implement seismic strengthening on soft-story houses without a structural engineer, saving a couple of thousand dollars.

And now, California is launching a limited pilot program, called Earthquake Soft-Story, that will offer select homeowners grants of up to $13,000 to help fund a retrofit. FEMA is providing $5 million, which is enough to help 375 homeowners.

"Hundreds of thousands of Californians are living in a soft-story structure that is a prime candidate for a retrofit," Glenn Pomeroy, chief executive of the California Earthquake Authority, said in a statement.

"As recent earthquakes in both California and the other side of the world remind us, older homes built before building codes were strengthened are much more likely to be badly damaged in an earthquake," Pomeroy said. "But action taken now can prevent catastrophic loss that could result from the next damaging earthquake."

Although a retrofit is not a small financial undertaking, repairing or replacing a damaged home would be far more expensive — and could take years. Owners forced out of their homes would still need to make mortgage payments while the home is being repaired or rebuilt.

By contrast, residents can remain in their homes during a soft-story retrofit, which typically takes four to six weeks.

Still, the cost, which could be on par with replacing a roof or an air conditioning system, could be challenging for those with limited funds.

Maffei said she knows the retrofits won't be easily affordable for everyone, even with the grant. But if more funding is secured, a future supplementary grant program could be available for low- to moderate-income homeowners.

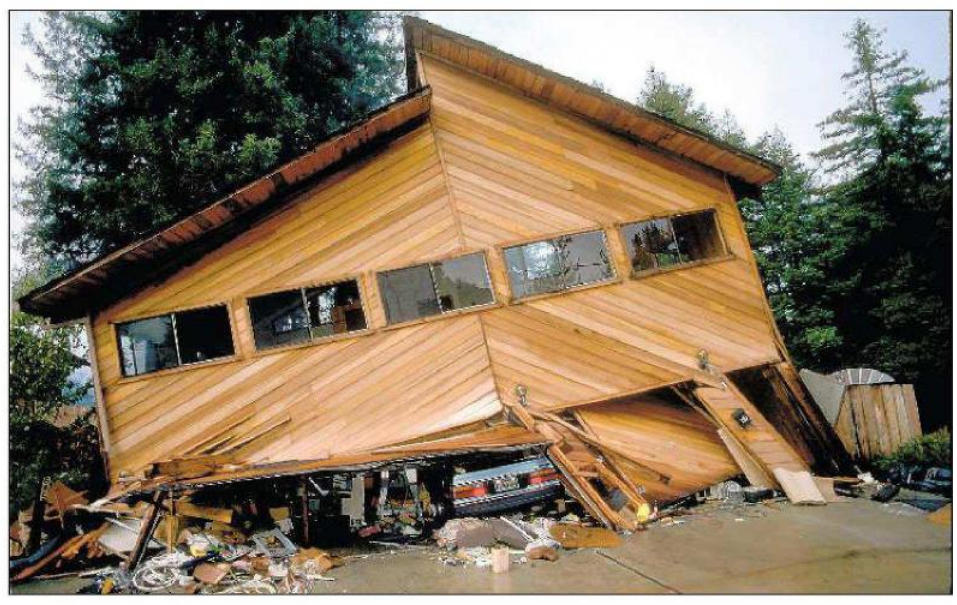
The California Residential Mitigation Program will administer the soft-story home retrofit grants, which will initially be limited to certain ZIP Codes in Los Angeles, Pasadena, San Francisco, Oakland and Berkeley. If the program is successful and more funding is secured, it is likely to expand to other areas.

Residents can apply for the grants in late April. But officials are first seeking more contractors to be trained to do the retrofits based on FEMA's plans. Licensed contractors can register at earthquakesoftstory.com; homeowners can also sign up for email alerts.

For now, grants are available only for homes with no more than two stories. Though it's possible additional stories could be covered by future grants, the current pre-engineered plans are for homes with two stories; three-story houses, like many Victorians, and some split-level homes would require a custom-designed retrofit plan.

There are soft-story homes all over California. They became common in the 20th century as cars became a prized possession.

In many neighborhoods, building a living space over the garage became an easy way to add more square footage as the appetite for larger homes grew.



J.K. Nakata U.S. Geological Survey

THE 1989 magnitude 6.9 Loma Prieta earthquake caused this home to collapse. Homes built before 2000 with a living area over a garage are vulnerable in quakes.

U.S. Geological Survey

CALIFORNIA is launching a pilot program that will offer select homeowners grants to help retrofit such homes. Above, a home after the 1971 Sylmar quake.

In Southern California, this type of home can be seen across the region, from the San Fernando Valley to the San Gabriel Valley, from the beach cities to the mountains. In the Bay Area, they also extend across the region, from pre-World War II homes in San Mateo County to late 20th century homes in Contra Costa County.

But soft-story homes collapsed or were severely damaged in Southern California in the 1971 Sylmar and 1994 Northridge earthquakes — magnitudes 6.6 and 6.7, respectively — and in Northern California, which was hit by the magnitude 6.9 Loma Prieta earthquake that struck Santa Cruz County and the San Francisco Bay Area in 1989, and the magnitude 6 Napa temblor of 2014.

Homes built in 2000 or later with a living space atop a garage are presumed to have been constructed to current earthquake standards and don't need a retrofit. Those building rules were updated after the 1989 and 1994 earthquakes.

Strengthening a garage to repair the collapse defect is straightforward. The key is installing a single steel column or one or two specially engineered walls that are 12 to 18 inches wide, made from either steel or wood and act like columns. These braces, installed by the garage door, are designed to resist side-to-side shaking in an earthquake and connect the second floor to the home's concrete foundation.

"That provides enough stiffness," Maffei said. "We're putting in elements that are going to hold it over its foundation."

In addition, retrofits typically involve the installation of plywood on the other three walls of the garage "just to stiffen it up to reduce damage," Maffei said.

BUSINESS

Sun is setting on rooftop solar incentives

Installers are racing to finish a huge surge of projects by April 14 deadline. But what happens after that?

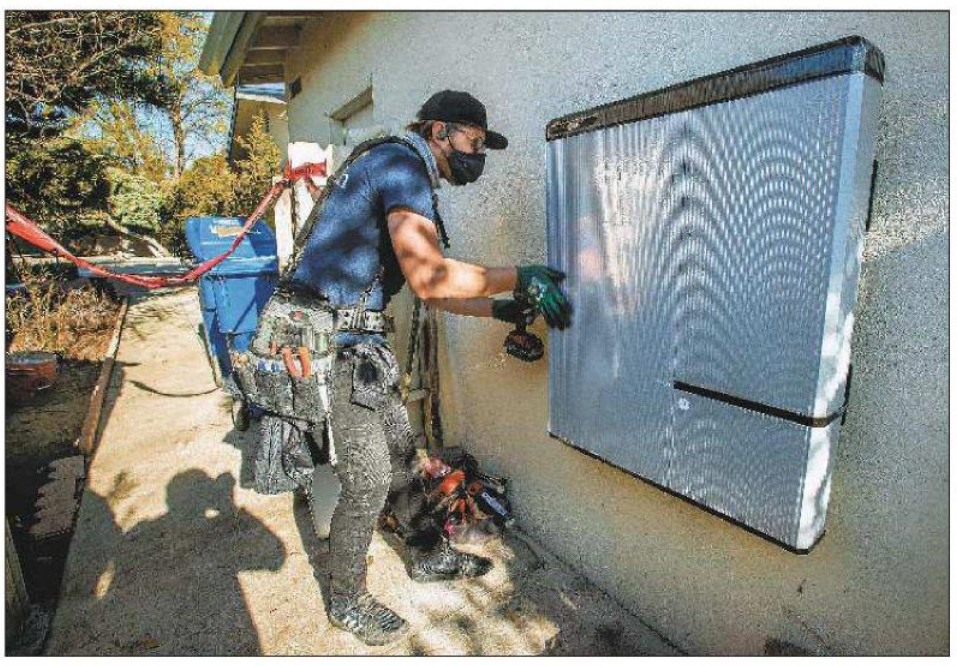
By Sammy Roth

Mel Melcon Los Angeles Times

A CREW from Sunrun installs panels on a Granada Hills home in 2020. One executive expects installations to fall by half after April 14.

Robert Gauthier Los Angeles Times

MEMBERS of the Solar Rights Alliance protest outside a Southern California Edison office in Long Beach in 2021. They opposed the move to end net metering.



Mel Melcon Los Angeles Times

OLIVER WALKER, a foreman for Sunrun, installs a lithium-ion battery. The share of solar customers who install a battery is expected to rise from 19% to 71%.

It's been nearly a decade since California lawmakers ordered the state's Public Utilities Commission to revamp a rooftop solar incentive program called net metering. In less than two weeks, we'll begin to see the consequences of that decision.

After 11:59 p.m. Friday, April 14, most Californians who want to put panels on their roofs will no longer have access to the same incentives that have helped more than 1.6 million homes and businesses go solar. Instead, they'll be faced with a far less generous incentive program known as net billing, which will result in lower savings on monthly electricity bills.

Why did state officials decide to slash solar payments? It boils down to the idea that monopoly utilities such as Southern California Edison don't collect as much money from homes with solar, forcing them to charge more to lower-income customers who can't afford solar. Rooftop installers and many clean energy activists reject that claim as wildly exaggerated.

The rooftop solar industry lost the argument. Now it's time to study what happens next.

EnergySage, a company that helps consumers compare rooftop solar bids from vetted contractors, released some useful data last month after surveying 35 installers. Nearly three-quarters said the new incentive program would significantly harm the California solar industry, with 90% expecting some amount of harm. Just one survey respondent said it would help the industry.

More optimistically, solar companies told EnergySage they expect the share of customers who install a battery alongside their rooftop panels to rise from 19% to 71%. Two-thirds of respondents said they plan to invest more in energy-storage sales.

That should be welcome news to Gov. Gavin Newsom's appointees on the Public Utilities Commission, who said one of their goals in lowering incentive payments for standalone solar systems was to encourage homes and businesses to add batteries.

But overall, installers painted a bleak picture of where the market is headed. One in five solar companies said they plan to slow hiring. Nearly 3 in 5 said they're less confident in the industry's future in the state than they were a year ago.

EnergySage Chief Executive Vikram Aggarwal said he expects solar installations to fall by half.

"This is bad. In America, with capitalism, we're very much used to growing year after year," he said.

The reduced solar payments won't affect homes that already have rooftop systems in place or customers of government-run electric utilities such as the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power. But the majority of Californians are served by the big investor-owned utilities regulated by the utilities commission: Edison, Pacific Gas & Electric and San Diego Gas & Electric.

If there's any saving grace for the solar industry, it's that business has been gangbusters the last few months.

EnergySage says the number of Californians buying solar through its digital marketplace has increased by more than 500% this quarter, as homes and businesses rush to qualify for the stronger incentive program before it goes away. Leaders of several installers painted a similar picture in conversations with The Times. All of them said their employees are scrambling to keep up with unprecedented demand and get photovoltaic panels on roofs before the April 14 deadline.

"Our people are working around the clock," said Mark Figearo, CEO of Green Convergence in Santa Clarita.

The surge in installations has created challenges — including for the monopoly electric utilities.

Before a home or business can power up its solar panels and connect to the grid, it must file an "interconnection request" with its electric utility. For many Californians, getting those requests approved has been slow as utilities grapple with the large increase in applications. Edison has told customers it may take up to 20 business days to review their requests.

The delays have left installers worried about what will happen in cases in which utilities reject a request as incomplete or containing errors. Homes and businesses have until April 14 to submit their paperwork — but what if Edison or PG&E issues a rejection April 15? Or on April 12, leaving too little time for the solar installer to correct and resubmit the request? Will families that signed solar contracts under the expectation of net metering find themselves stuck with the weaker incentives?

Vincent Battaglia, CEO of Renova Energy in the Coachella Valley, said he set a deadline of March 31 to submit requests to Edison, out of fear the utility will scour the paperwork for small, insignificant mistakes to try to limit the number of people who can qualify for net metering and secure years of higher payments for the solar electricity they produce.

"They're kind of making the rules up as they go, which leads me to be suspicious," Battaglia said.

Brad Heavner, policy director at the California Solar & Storage Assn., an industry trade group, said installers are "on pins and needles right now" about how Edison and the other investor-owned utilities will deal with last-minute paperwork errors. He said the utility companies have ensured the solar industry they'll allow minor mistakes to be fixed after the April 14 deadline, but they haven't offered enough guidance on what constitutes a major mistake versus a minor one.

"We're very nervous. It's all up to them," Heavner said. "They could say anything is a major deficiency."

Asked about those concerns, Edison spokesperson Ron Gales provided The Times with a detailed list of "major" and "minor" deficiencies. He also said processing delays have been caused by the incredible volume of solar applications — 16,000 in January, 24,000 in February and an expected 55,000 in March, compared with an average of 4,000 a month in recent years.

Although Edison staffed up in anticipation of a last-minute surge, "no one predicted this level of volume," he said in an email.

Solar installers in parts of Northern and Central California served by PG&E described an additional problem: The utility's website for submitting interconnection requests has been periodically down for maintenance, and occasionally glitching out.

"Recently, we've been able to get through the whole application process until we try to pay with a credit card, and the credit card processing has been crashing," said Barry Cinnamon, CEO of San Francisco Bay Area solar installer Cinnamon Energy Systems.

"It's a hostile bureaucracy. They don't have any incentive to make the website better," he added.

Asked about that complaint, PG&E spokesperson Lynsey Paulo blamed a "significant increase in traffic," about three times the typical monthly average to the solar applications page. She said the site "has experienced temporary performance issues just over the last week," and that "those issues have been quickly resolved."

If there are more problems closer to the April 14 deadline, she said, the company would be lenient with customers submitting last-minute solar connection requests.

Also important: Just because net metering is going away doesn't mean there's no financial case for solar anymore.

Aggarwal, the EnergySage CEO, said Texas and Florida have similar solar "payback periods" — the number of years it takes customers to make back their upfront investment — as California is expected to have under the new incentive program. Those states haven't installed nearly as much solar as this one, but they're still the country's second- and third-largest markets.

"Utilities are asking for further rate increases and will continue to ask for further rate increases," Aggarwal said. "Not everybody will be able to afford [solar]. But as electricity prices go up, solar again will become more affordable."

Some clean energy advocates are holding out hope that they can keep current incentive levels in place.

In January, three advocacy groups — the Center for Biological Diversity, Environmental Working Group and Protect Our Communities Foundation — filed a formal appeal asking the Public Utilities Commission to reconsider its December decision.

The groups argued that commission officials hadn't complied with the 2013 law requiring them to reevaluate net metering, in part because they'd failed to take into account all the benefits of rooftop solar — such as protecting homes from blackouts and utility power shutoffs, slashing air pollution from fossil-fueled power plants in low-income communities, reducing the need for expensive long-distance transmission lines, and potentially limiting the environmental damage from large solar farms.

The Public Utilities Commission hasn't yet responded to the appeal.

"We're hopeful that they do the right thing, and we don't have to take this to court," said Roger Lin, an attorney at the Center for Biological Diversity.

This isn't the only case in which the utilities commission has disappointed rooftop solar advocates.

In February, commission staff proposed to dismiss an application from Houston installer Sunnova to build solar-plus-storage microgrids to power whole neighborhoods, without any involvement from the monopoly utilities. The arguments for and against Sunnova's plan are complicated. The company says it can offer families a cheaper way to keep the lights on; critics worry its microgrids would raise utility bills for everyone else, or even backfire if the company can't live up to its obligations.

"Our hope is that the commission recognizes that this is an opportunity for them, and that we don't bureaucracy ourselves out of innovation and competition," said Meghan Nutting, Sunnova's executive vice president for government and regulatory affairs.

Whoever is right, this is another example of state officials grappling with the growing number of people and businesses looking for alternatives to traditional monopoly utilities — and at least so far, choosing to play it slow and cautious.

For Matt Baker, who leads the utilities commission's ratepayer advocacy office, a totally decentralized power grid isn't the solution to our climate change and cost problems. But neither is what he called the "one ring" approach of letting utilities do everything (a reference to "one ring to rule them all" from the "Lord of the Rings" trilogy).

Baker supported slashing rooftop solar incentives because he believes doing so will result in lower electricity bills for homes that don't have solar. He also urged the commission to reject Sunnova's microgrid application on similar grounds. But he's convinced we need a lot more rooftop solar, and he sees a role for microgrids too. He thinks the key is to move slowly and carefully.

"It's all going to be very expensive, unless we try to make sure that things are as cost-based as possible," he said.

And here's where we get to the crux of the challenge. California needs to move ridiculously fast to stop burning fossil fuels and limit the damage from climate change, as does the rest of the world.

But what's the right balance between big solar farms, small rooftop systems and other forms of clean energy? And how do we keep power costs from rising so fast that people won't want to buy or lease electric cars, and replace their gas furnaces with electric heat pumps?

Part of California's answer is to do away with net metering. Starting in two weeks, we'll see the results.

This story was originally published in Boiling Point, an email newsletter about climate change and the environment in California and the American West. Go to latimes.com/boilingpoint to sign up.

OPINION

EDITORIALS

Old tool revived for new fight

Abortion opponents are trying to weaponize a 150-year-old vice law against reproductive rights.

The Comstock Act of 1873 is a relic, the work of an anti-vice crusader, Anthony Comstock, who lobbied Congress to prohibit, among other things, the mailing of any "obscene, lewd, or lascivious" written material. The act, formally known as "An Act for the Suppression of Trade in, and Circulation of, obscene Literature and Articles of immoral Use," also forbid the mailing of "any article or thing, designed or intended for the prevention of conception, or procuring of abortion."

Over the decades, federal courts have narrowed the interpretation of this blunderbuss of a law, finding it ran into 1st Amendment issues. Congress removed the prohibition on contraception in 1971. And federal courts have agreed since the early 20th century that the law does not prohibit all mailing of items for an abortion, according to a December 2022 opinion from the Office of Legal Counsel for the U.S. Department of Justice.

Attempts to repeal the Comstock Act have been unsuccessful, but it is so antiquated that it's considered a "zombie" law — mostly dormant on the books.

But once the Supreme Court overturned Roe vs. Wade and numerous states enacted severe abortion restrictions or near bans, abortion opponents rooted through the federal code to reanimate the Comstock Act, arguing that it prevents the mailing of medication abortion pills everywhere. The most commonly used form of abortion is medication pills. They are relatively easy to get and the Food and Drug Administration has recently made them easier to get by allowing telehealth medical appointments for abortion and also allowing pharmacies to get certified to sell — and mail — abortion pills.

All this has made medication abortion a target for abortion opponents determined to wipe out an easily accessible form of abortion. They have sued the FDA in federal court, arguing that medication drugs have not been studied adequately and need to be taken off the market. (A ruling on that case could come any day.)

After Walgreens announced that it would get certified to sell abortion pills last month, 20 state attorneys general wrote the company warning that, among other things, it was illegal to send out the abortion pills, mifepristone and misoprostol, in the mail.

But it's not. So says the legal counsel for the Justice Department. In a December opinion responding to a request from the U.S. postmaster general, the counsel concluded that the law "does not prohibit the mailing, or the delivery or receipt by mail, of mifepristone or misoprostol where the sender lacks the intent that the recipient of the drugs will use them unlawfully."

The opinion makes it clear that both the courts and Congress interpret the law to refer to "unlawful" abortions — and that there's no way that the Postal Service (or any other common carrier or express service that is also under this edict) could know why anyone is using the pills. Misoprostol in particular is used for a number of other medical reasons.

For example, the pills could be going to states (such as California) where abortion is protected and available through the first two trimesters of pregnancy. Or they could be going to a state where abortion is widely banned except when the health of the pregnant person is at risk, or in cases of rape or incest. Or they could be intended for other medical uses.

"Therefore, the mere mailing of such drugs to a particular jurisdiction is an insufficient basis for concluding that the sender intends them to be used unlawfully," the Justice Department's opinion says.

This legal advice probably won't stop antiabortion state lawmakers from citing the Comstock Act to pass laws prohibiting the mailing of medication abortion into their states. (Missouri bans the mailing of abortion pills — but it's already under a near-total abortion ban that would supersede any ban on medication abortion mailing.) Of course, the Biden administration wouldn't enforce that law against the U.S. Postal Service. But what these state restrictions — and threats from state attorneys general — do is intimidate pharmaceutical companies into not selling abortion pills through mail-order, and healthcare providers into not even trying to send out medication even though the federal government has said it is legal to do so.

Antiabortion lawmakers are not attempting to uphold the law. Instead, abortion opponents want to weaponize a 150-year-old law that shouldn't even be on the books to further their goal of taking away a right to reproductive healthcare. No one should give in to their threats.

Charlie Neibergall Associated Press

THESE TWO medications are used for about half of the abortions in the U.S.

ENDORSEMENT

Santana for L.A. City Council

In the special election to fill the vacancy in council District 6, he's the best of seven candidates.

Myung J. Chun Los Angeles Times

On Tuesday, voting in a special election primary for Los Angeles City Council District 6 in the San Fernando Valley wraps up. The district, which includes parts of Van Nuys, Panorama City, Arleta and Sun Valley, has gone without a representative since October, when then-City Council President Nury Martinez resigned after leaked audio recordings revealed her and two other council members making racist, divisive comments. If no candidate wins 50% of the vote, the runoff will be June 27.

The Editorial Board interviewed the seven candidates for the race, talked to people who know their work and researched their backgrounds. Our conclusion is that Marco Santana is the best candidate. Santana has deep roots in the community. It's where he grew up, and he has worked on the ground as a district representative for former state Sen. Bob Hertzberg (D-Van Nuys) and as a field representative for Rep. Tony Cárdenas (D-Pacoima). For the last five years, Santana has helped move homeless individuals and families into shelter and housing as director of engagement at L.A. Family Housing. He understands the complexities of homelessness and has concrete ideas for what the city needs to do to alleviate the crisis.

For decades, District 6 has been shortchanged when it comes to city services and investment. But that could soon change. Metro is building the $2-billion East San Fernando Valley light-rail project along Van Nuys Boulevard, which used to be a commercial and governmental center but is now pockmarked with vacant storefronts. And 2028 Olympics planners want to use the Sepulveda Basin Recreation Area to host equestrian, shooting and canoe events, which will require construction of temporary or permanent facilities.

Those are projects that could bring lasting improvements to the district — but residents and businesses need a skilled representative to ensure that community voices are heard during the planning process and that the agencies deliver on their promises. We think Santana has the vision and experience to help the district thrive.

LETTERS

Dania Maxwell Los Angeles Times

MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS, seen leaving the federal courthouse in downtown Los Angeles on March 27, was convicted on seven counts in a corruption case.

'He is now a corrupt former politician'

Re: "Was justice really served?" column, March 31

Suspended L.A. City Councilman Mark Ridley-Thomas was a successful and effective political leader in several elected positions for decades. I understand why columnist Erika D. Smith laments his recent conviction, which will probably end his long career as an elected official.

Of course, Ridley-Thomas still has many friends and supporters. But the long investigation into his behavior as an L.A. County supervisor and his conviction on a number of serious criminal charges clearly demonstrate that power had gone to his head and he was guilty of corruption.

Smith asks, "Why is this the corruption we care about?" Ridley-Thomas betrayed our trust by using his power to pursue personal gain. He is now a corrupt former politician.

The fact that he is Black should not be a factor in judging him or holding him accountable.

Steve Freedman
Venice

Ridley-Thomas' corruption conviction last week is a tragedy in the Shakespearean sense, a good man brought down by his own failings.

Rather than explaining the unease and unhappiness of some in Black community at the guilty verdict after Ridley-Thomas' trial, it might have been better for Smith to educate readers about the fact that past good deeds do not justify present-day unethical or corrupt behavior.

Ridley-Thomas' record of past community activism and positive legislation may be a mitigating factor at his sentencing, but it should not be used to shield him from the consequences of his corrupt acts.

Demetrius Pohl
Los Angeles

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Maybe when Ridley-Thomas is sentenced to prison there will be justice. His conviction stems from working to get his adult son a job and into graduate school on a scholarship at USC.

My children, like thousands of others, were never offered a free ride at USC. But then again, I never had anything to offer in return. The Los Angeles politburo is rife with back-door dealing.

Remember, character counts — or at least it used to.

Glenn Zweifel
Los Angeles

::

Smith states that permanently sidelining a leader who been so effective actually feels like opening the door to greater injustice.

Of course, the jury made the right decision on Ridley-Thomas. If Donald Trump is not above the law, and he shouldn't be, then it stands that no one should be above the law, no matter how much good they did.

So, if a segment of the population is going to suffer as a result, there is only one person to blame for that: Mark Ridley-Thomas. As the saying goes, "Let justice be done though the heavens fall."

Joseph Lombardo
Upland

Big Tech and kids' behavior

Re "Big Tech's sickness fuels failures like Silicon Valley Bank," Opinion, March 26

Thank you very much for publishing Roger McNamee's op-ed article. Among his many valid points, McNamee emphasizes how the "culture and business practices" of the tech sector have "shifted the burden of harm" to consumers.

I am a high school English teacher, and many of my own students have addictive and potentially dangerous relationships with their smartphones. I am frequently confiscating phones, asking them to be put away, or a witness to foolish behavior promoted by their apps.

Thankfully, I can say most students are able to control themselves, but for the more vulnerable, smartphones are too easily misused and abused.

Thank you for furthering this important discussion about the power of this dynamic industry. As I often ask my students: "Who's in control — you or the phone?" For many, unfortunately, it is the latter.

Matthew Burger
Long Beach

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Apparently the same supposedly self-made millionaire executives who decry students for getting partial loan forgiveness, arguing that they knew what they were doing when they signed the loan agreement, didn't read the sign on the Silicon Valley Bank's door stating that deposits were insured by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation up to $250,000.

John Goodman
Oak Park

Disney's lagoon in the desert

Re "Disney shows and tells Storyliving in desert," March 29

I am appalled by the "ambitious" master-planned community to be developed by Disney in the Coachella Valley, with the Burbank entertainment giant's "whimsy and wonder."

In an era of global climate change, this project, with its "grand oasis" of waterparks and swimming pools in one of the driest areas of the state, is a slap in the face to all of us who try to do our part in California's water conservation effort.

Granted, this announcement comes at a time of an amazing winter with plentiful water, but we all know that this is most likely a short-term event and the dry times are not very far off.

The planned community with 1,930 residential units is a behemoth in the Coachella Valley. This is all about making money for Disney. Are there any incentives being offered by Riverside County for this project? The article did not say.

I guess open natural space in the desert and everywhere else is a thing of the past.

Peter Pfeiffer
Altadena

::

In the Coachella Valley, residents have been asked to reduce water usage by 15%.

We have done that. Our yards are sand and rock. We are careful with showers, baths, dish washing and laundry.

It's not easy; it's considerate and careful.

Now, Disney wants to build a community half a mile from my home that will feature a 24-acre lagoon. Not a fountain, not a pond — a lagoon.

So when I take a really short shower, I should think what?

Anne Winter
Palm Desert

Gloria Molina, master quilter

Re "Gloria Molina says she's battling terminal cancer," March 15

I was involved with the Glendale Quilt Guild from 2002 to 2008. I was lucky to chair the 2008 quilt show, where I saw then-Los Angeles County Supervisor Gloria Molina in action.

She headed up the doll exhibit and was amazing. I couldn't have completed the show without her help and support.

When I think of Gloria, I see her beautiful quilts, wearables and dolls. Her boundless energy brought together so many creative people.

With news last month of her terminal cancer diagnosis, I wanted to thank her publicly for all the amazing work she did to help the Glendale Quilt Guild be a diverse art forum.

Michele Pusateri
South Pasadena

HOW TO WRITE TO US

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OP-ED

IRFAN KHAN Los Angeles Times

LOS ANGELES high school students participate in global strikes for climate change action.

Gen Z has reason for anger. Will they burn it all down?

Donald Trump's election in 2016 was a turning point for these young adults, who learned early in their lives that American exceptionalism was a lie

JEAN GUERRERO

GENERATION Z seems like a paradox: far more open to diverse viewpoints and compromise than older Americans, but also in some ways more dogmatic.

Will young people extinguish the flames of political polarization or fan them? As their values clash with those of the oldest generations hoarding power, the fires of extremism crackle louder and expand.

It's impossible to predict what 69 million Gen Zers will do. But it doesn't take a crystal ball to see that as the arsonist GOP elders double down, young people will be more inclined to burn things too.

Still, there's hope. Gen Zers can negotiate differences better than perhaps any prior generation; some call them Plurals because of their pluralist nature. They're the most racially and ethnically diverse voters. They're more likely to identify as LGBTQ: 20% of them, compared with 11% of millennials and only 3% among older people. They're averse to binaries, be it man vs. woman or citizen vs. illegal. A quarter are Latinx. They're less likely than millennials to be immigrants, but more likely to be children of immigrants — cross-border in culture and identity.

They're digital natives, born between 1997 and 2012, when surfing the web was already mainstream. They prefer TikTok to TV. Liberal-vs.-conservative cable news pundits are a bore next to social media's multiverse of raw commentary. Social media's negative impact has been greater on this group than any other. Depression, anxiety and feelings of loneliness — made worse by the pandemic — are big challenges. Yet many Gen Zers are demonstrating a remarkable resilience, channeling their sense of unease into advocacy for the most vulnerable.

They share millennials' progressive ideas on social issues, but are more likely to support radical policies, such as reparations for descendants of enslaved people. They're more likely to believe the government should do more to help people. They believe in advocating for the Other, except when the Other is a bully.

"You either have sensitivity to people or you don't," Mariah Allen, an 18-year-old Black student at Loyola Marymount University, told me ahead of her class on Bad Bunny's activism. "If you don't, you're kind of being excluded."

Like other Gen Zers, Allen grew up on stories about teenagers rebelling against oppressive governments, from "The Hunger Games" to the "Divergent" series. Perhaps that's why they're more politically engaged than millennials were at their age. While millennials came of age on Harry Potter's lessons of a community's importance, Gen Zers immersed themselves in worlds of uprisings. "We've been reading political commentary since like middle school," Allen said.

In last year's midterm elections, Gen Zers helped Democrats win in nearly every battleground statewide race and grew the Democrats' majority in the U.S. Senate. They were key to President Biden's 2020 victory despite their qualms about him. Even though they're more likely than older generations to be disillusioned with both political parties, they vote.

"If we don't vote, nothing's going to change," Ethan "E" Carter, an 18-year-old Latino classmate of Allen's, told me. "Incremental change over radical change must be prioritized 'cause it's better than no change."

They're pragmatic progressives who see too much at stake for an all-or-nothing approach. "They won't compromise their values, but they're not afraid to compromise on the perfect solution in order to make progress," John Della Volpe, polling director at the Harvard Kennedy School Institute of Politics, told me.

Yet, they've been vilified as anti-American. They're less likely than older people to say that the U.S. is better than all other countries, but the unpatriotic label is unfair given their civic engagement. They care about the country. They value the diverse reality of who Americans are; they're not interested in preserving an America that's monolithic in culture or politics.

The election of Donald Trump was a turning point for these young adults, akin to the 9/11 terrorist attacks for millennials. Gen Zers realized as kids that American exceptionalism was a lie. As immigration enforcement deported their parents and police tear-gassed them at racial justice protests during a pandemic, many had a sense of déja vu for the dystopian teen dramas they once read. They were prepared.

They turned out to vote and deployed their social media accounts as political weapons. They used TikTok to sink a Trump rally, and Olivia Julianna, a 19-year-old in Texas, trolled Rep. Matt Gaetz (R-Fla.) and used his name to raise $2 million for abortion funds. Some experts warn of a revolution brewing within Gen Z. But they aren't destroyers; they're coalition builders.

Generations come in cycles: an ideological generation like the Boomers; a reactive one like Gen Xers who reject fanaticism; a civic-minded one like millennials who want to help the community; followed by an adaptive one that finishes what the civic one started.

"That's what Plurals are," Morley Winograd, a longtime expert on young voters and generational change, told me. "They're kind of millennials on steroids. They've not only learned to negotiate, live and succeed in a pluralistic, non-majoritarian world, but they're not tolerant of people who want to go back to the days of dominance by one group."

In Los Angeles, a younger City Council is already demonstrating some of those qualities — pragmatism and less interest in labels and division. They're focusing on renters and public transportation. In the Council District 6 special election on Tuesday, all seven candidates are younger than 40 and reject the zero-sum politics of former Councilwoman Nury Martinez, who resigned after making racist comments. "I'm not a mean girl," candidate Marisa Alcaraz, 35, told me. She's inspired by Selena Gomez's "Kill 'Em With Kindness," a worthy theme song for Gen Z.

Of course, not everyone agrees about this generation's spirit of inclusiveness.

In her forthcoming book "Generations," Jean Twenge, a psychology professor at San Diego State, argues that Gen Z is becoming more extreme and intolerant. "Gen Z has gone the way of older generations, increasingly moving to the poles of political belief, but they are doing so sooner in life," she writes. She cites a survey by Monitoring the Future showing a rise in the percentage of 12th-graders who identify at the extremes of political ideology. The share of those who identify as "very conservative" doubled from 4% nearly four decades ago to 8% today. Those who identify as "very liberal" or "radical" rose from 9% to 16%.

And there is cause for worry, as seen on some college campuses with students shouting down political opponents and controversial speakers — a tactic that tends to strengthen the other side's extremism. But the youngest voters' openness to compromise at the ballot box should temper such concerns.

Generations move like murmurations, with every individual shaping the trajectory of the mass by swaying their closest neighbors. Every Gen Zer has the power to change the course of their peers. Every conversation counts.

Bianca Valentín, a 21-year-old student at Loyola Marymount University, recalls that in her first year in high school, her class was a microcosm of polarization. Some students were devastated by Trump's election; others were dismissive of that reaction. It led to a lot of fighting. The administration sent concerned letters to parents.

"As I got older, the same girls who were telling me not to cry that Trump was elected then became very liberal," Valentín recalls. She attributes the change to conversations students had in person and on social media. The teens shared videos and other content about how policies were affecting them and built political empathy. "We all got to the root of like, 'OK, we're all human beings,' " she said.

Getting past polarization affects their electoral choices. Many Republicans, particularly older ones, see Gen Zers as impinging on their political power. Young people's fluidity with identity may be foreign to them, but they will have to contend with it. Although most white Americans older than 30 voted Republican in the midterm elections, 58% of whites under age 30 voted for Democratic House candidates.

At the same time, younger Republicans are becoming more socially liberal than their parents. A full 54% of those under age 45 believe America's openness to immigrants is essential, while only a third of those older than 45 think so, according to an analysis of October 2022 Pew Research data by Michael Hais, who co-authored three books with Winograd.

Gen Z Republicans are more likely than their older counterparts to acknowledge that Black people are treated less fairly than whites today: 43% say this, compared with 30% of Republican millennials and 20% of Republican Gen Xers.

By contrast, among Democrats of all ages, views on social issues are aligning. "It's really the Republicans who are more divided at this point," Hais told me. There is a widening generational rupture on the right as youths of all backgrounds learn to coexist and care about one another. "Younger people are more willing to work together across a variety of lines: age, generation, party, race," he said.

Gen Zers and millennials will represent nearly 40% of votes in the 2024 election. Millennials are the first generation that hasn't become more conservative with age, and Gen Zers are following in their progressive footsteps.

The GOP's future, whether it accepts the reality or not, will depend on winning over this generation. As long as Gen Zers fight apathy and cynicism about politics, they may come to wield far more power than they think they have.

@jeanguerre

Politicians' attack on drag has a long and illogical history

Whipping up moral panic about queens leading story hours at libraries is part of a war on LGBTQ+ lives.

By Lucas Hilderbrand

JASON REDMOND Los Angeles Times

DRAG QUEEN Sylvia O'Stayformore reads to families.

IN A 2020 episode of "RuPaul's Drag Race," the contestants participated in a parody of a presidential candidate debate. Jaida Essence Hall handily won the challenge with her refrain, "Look over there!" as she pointed at nothing. This joke became both her catchphrase and a jab at distraction politics.

Recent efforts to criminalize drag might seem like distraction politics, but these laws are not mere misdirection. Political attacks on drag are part of the broader war on LGBTQ+ lives.

After whipping up moral panic about drag queen story hours at public libraries, conservative politicians have introduced dozens of specifically anti-drag bills during the first few months of 2023. Tennessee took the lead as the first state to sign one into law.

As such legislation gains traction, it also emboldens transphobic and homophobic violence, along with overzealous policing.

Political progress for LGBTQ+ people is relatively recent and only partial. But backlash has been swift and sweeping. As underrepresented people achieve legal enfranchisement and media representation, through TV series such as "Drag Race" and "We're Here," they also become increasingly targeted by street violence and by political efforts to repeal protections in reaction to this exposure. This is what scholars call "the trap of visibility."

But efforts to regulate gender expression and sexuality have long histories and are almost always contradictory in their logic.

Historically in theater and vaudeville, and even still in comedy, cross-dressing in character has not indicated that the performer is LGBTQ+. For centuries, women were prohibited from performing onstage, so men necessarily played female roles. After that convention ended, when men continued to appear in dresses, they provoked astonishment or laughter from audiences.

Ironically, the 19th century popularity of onstage female impersonation for predominantly straight audiences coincided with the rise of laws policing citizens' gendered dress off-stage. Such ordinances, often called masquerade laws, typically stipulated that people in public had to wear at least three items of clothing belonging to their sex as assigned at birth. These laws gave police leeway to harass and arrest gender-nonconforming people, whatever their identities.

What most people think of as drag emerged as a gay male nightclub staple in the 1960s, when LGBTQ+ public life became increasingly possible.

Drag queens are essential for the same reason they are perceived as threatening to the status quo: They cut through pretenses and fraudulent norms with their incisive wit, through a queer art of insult called "reading." Drag is many things, including drag kings and performers who undo gendered binaries. It spans the full range from family friendly to adult entertainment.

Recent political ploys recall previous attempts that baselessly alleged that LGBTQ+ adults were pedophiles who preyed upon youth. The most famous instances date from the late 1970s: the 1977 Save Our Children campaign in Florida and the 1978 Briggs Initiative in California, a failed proposition to ban gay and lesbian teachers.

The American Civil Liberties Union has tracked more than 400 anti-LGBTQ+ bills this legislative session. Most target trans people, especially youth. Many politicians pushing the bills are so locked into heterosexual worldviews that when they see a drag queen performing femininity, they wrongly believe that drag's goal is to incite sexual arousal. For gay audiences, that's rarely the case.

Lawmakers insinuate that drag is like sex work and want to zone drag venues like adult businesses, but minors are already prohibited from 21-and-up venues.

Conservative politicians also blur distinctions between drag and trans life. Trans performers participate in the scene, but drag and transness are not one and the same.

We are witnessing a tidal shift as unprecedented numbers of young people reject gender norms and identify as nonbinary and trans at earlier ages than before.

The reactionary efforts to prevent youth from self-defining do not come out of concern for their well-being. Indeed, given the disproportionately high rates of suicide among trans and queer youth, these vicious policies should be considered genocidal.

Despite rhetoric that these legal measures protect children from drag queens, most LGBTQ+ adults say that they were not groomed by drag queens or corrupted by seeing the few media representations that were available.

Instead, they accepted their gender identity and sexuality *in spite of* pervasive societal pressures to be gender-normative and straight.

If drag "corrupts" the youth, it is by showing that other selves, genders and perspectives are possible. Watching drag cannot make people trans or queer. But it might make youth feel seen, and it might save lives.

LUCAS HILDERBRAND is chair of film and media studies at UC Irvine. He is the author of a book on the film "Paris is Burning" and the forthcoming book "The Bars Are Ours: Histories and Cultures of Gay Bars in America, 1960 and After."

When hate, not love, so often rules the day

[**Tolerance,** from A1]

Stuhl's plea for humans to reach for the best in themselves is hard to digest when outside this museum on the streets of Los Angeles, across California and around the nation, it is hate, not love, that so often rules the day.

I've come to this museum, and roamed its leafy neighborhood of one-story homes and mom-and-pop businesses, feeling unnerved that age-old prejudices have found legions of adherents in our time.

Two shootings in February that targeted Jewish residents in the Pico-Robertson neighborhood — both victims survived — only deepened my alarm.

I didn't want to wait until the next act of violence against Jews to happen here — or for yet another hate-fueled massacre elsewhere — to be reminded of the yearning for acceptance that binds those who've historically endured discrimination and violence because of who they are.

As Rabbi Abraham Cooper, associate dean of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, the human rights organization that operates the museum, says: "The time to roll up our sleeves is not during crisis. It's when things are quiet."

But with Americans starkly divided along cultural fault lines — religious hatred, racism and hostility toward the LGBTQ community abound — and with many reluctant to talk about the nation's legacy of injustice, do we have it in us to embrace one another's humanity?

Photographs by CHRISTINA HOUSE Los Angeles Times

VISITORS to the Museum of Tolerance watch a video after a tour that included a discussion about present-day hate crimes.

RABBI Yoshi Zimmerman, 32, leads a group of high school students on a tour of the museum.

Guides usher groups through the museum's sometimes eerie exhibits to give them context for what they're seeing and hearing.

At the end of a recent tour, Rabbi Yoshi Zimmerman tries to achieve a breakthrough with high school students who sit cross-legged and stone-faced on the floor. The group is a lot like L.A., a mix of races.

They've just spent time in the grimmest section of the Holocaust exhibit, where they had to file through brick tunnels into a stark, windowless room that evokes a gas chamber.

The 32-year-old rabbi tells them they should not think of the repression of Jews as all in the past.

Zimmerman asks them to consider the antisemitic online tirades by the rapper Kanye West, now known as Ye. He has been blocked from Twitter, but Ye continues to have more followers on Instagram, 18 million, than the population of Jews in the entire world, about 15 million.

His fan base remains strong despite his threat to go "death con 3 On JEWISH PEOPLE," one of several posts he eventually apologized for.

Zimmerman moves on to other present-day events.

"When was the last time that someone came into a synagogue and shot it up and killed people? Two weeks ago," Zimmerman says. "The last time a country closed its doors to Jews so that Jews were not allowed to live there — when was that? Two years ago. ... It's the same rhetoric, the same sentiments, the same ideas."

The group remains silent. It's a lot to take in. Even for someone who arrived already knowing plenty about the Holocaust, the exhibit can feel overwhelming.

Zimmerman plows ahead.

"What stops it from happening this time?" he says, then answers his own question. "The world you want to create, the world you want to live in, no one is going to make it but you."

Many students voice sympathy for what happened to Jews in Nazi Germany. But some days are like this one — stunned faces and awkward silences.

Sometimes, all he gets are shrugs.

And then there are the students who tell him they feel no moral responsibility to denounce bias crimes against Jews, which is all the more disheartening given that these incidents hit record levels nationwide in 2022, according to a new report by the Anti-Defamation League.

"I'd say 90% of the kids have not met a Jew at all," Zimmerman says. "You'd be surprised at how many say, 'It doesn't affect me. It's not my people. I don't care.' "

In those moments, Zimmerman tries to turn the table on his audience: "If they came and said, 'We're going to kill and deport your family,' would you hope that *I* would care?"

The reverse-psychology tactic works, but only occasionally, Zimmerman says.

For Cooper, 72, tolerance is more of an aspiration — a work that is perpetually in progress rather than a fact of life.

It's a challenge to travel the globe preaching about compassion alongside presidents, popes and civic leaders when the voices of hate and resentment reverberate so forcefully in the unguarded echo canyons of people's online lives — and in real life closer to home in L.A.

In October, demonstrators hung a banner from a 405 Freeway overpass that read, "Kanye is right about the Jews" and raised their arms in the Nazi salute.

Cooper arrived in L.A. in 1977 with dreams of making the world safer for his people — and for all people. He joined Rabbi Marvin Hier, the Wiesenthal Center's chief executive and president, to help found the center alongside its namesake. Wiesenthal, the late Ukraine-born architect, Holocaust survivor and Nazi hunter, with his wife lost 89 family members to Hitler's crusade against Jews.

"One time he was asked at a university in Ohio in 1980, 'Were you surprised at how many Nazis there were?' " Cooper recalls of his friend Wiesenthal. "He said, 'No. I was only surprised by how few *anti*-Nazis there were.' "

That's the unnerving thing about the recent spike in hate crimes. In times of peril, it can be hard to know who has your back.

The Pico-Robertson neighborhood occupies a part of L.A. that's a checkerboard of enclaves rather than a true melting pot — among them Ethiopian, Persian and LGBTQ. Crossing paths with someone who doesn't look like you, trust you, worship the same God as you or understand your story is almost inevitable.

On traffic-clogged La Cienega and Robertson boulevards, drivers speed through green lights past weed dispensaries, carwashes and Orthodox Jewish men leaving synagogue in their black suits, white button-downs and wide-brimmed hats.

At Sideshow Bookstore on La Cienega, the cramped aisles are piled high with volumes on Judaism and every genre of literature and nonfiction. A portrait of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. watches over owner Tony Jacobs, who greets customers with an offer of free espresso.

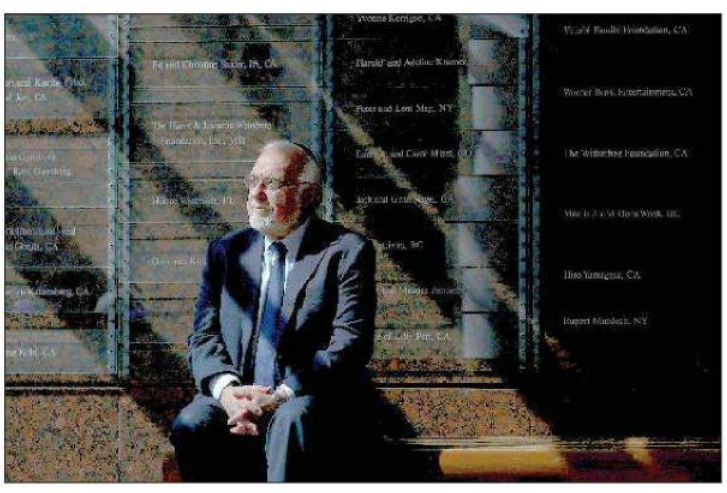
"It feels like we're living in a climate from 100 years ago," says Jacobs, 62, who considers himself a secular Jew. It scares him — the way a baseless conspiracy theory or online rant can metastasize and cause so much harm.

He worries that many Americans have given up on learning about people whose lives are different from their own.

Even so, pockets of hope and trust endure. Down a nearby side street, two Jewish boys, ages 8 and 10, sell homemade cookies and shout "Free lemonade!" to all who pass their block of Midcentury cottages fronted by lush gardens.

On the porch of one of the boys' homes, his mother explains why she's comfortable allowing the kids to set up their stand not far from where the shootings in February happened. Her willingness to talk is remarkable given that I'm a Black man in a neighborhood with few who look like me.

Children need to be taught to be vigilant, she says, but they also need to be free to enjoy being young. She refuses to allow the haters to change the way her family lives.



RABBI Abraham Cooper, 72, is associate dean of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, which operates the museum.

JACKIE ROSNER, 92, left, and daughter Denise, 59, depart after eating lunch at Factor's, a Jewish deli on Pico Boulevard.

At Factor's, a Jewish deli on Pico that's been in business for 75 years, neighborhood regulars and patrons from other parts of the city fill booths in the mirrored dining room. They chat and laugh while enjoying matzo ball soup, latkes and towers of slow-roasted pastrami on rye bread.

And yet, for some of those who are Jewish, it's hard to carry on business as usual in these uneasy times.

One woman who lives nearby explains that she stopped wearing her Star of David pendant to make herself less conspicuous. The woman sitting next to her says she's so fearful of an antisemitic attack that she won't walk through the area alone.

What tears at the restaurant's co-owner, Debbie Markowitz Ullman, is that many Americans believe the Holocaust was made up.

"All the photos and everything else we have as evidence and people still say it didn't happen," says Ullman, 60, who also lives in the neighborhood. "That's just being naive — or maybe they don't want to know the truth."

A framed portrait of her mother, Lili Markowitz, hangs at the back of the restaurant. Markowitz, who died in 2020 at age 94, survived the Holocaust, as did her late husband, Herman Markowitz. But her younger sister, younger brother and father perished in the Auschwitz concentration camp.

"Being the daughter of a Holocaust survivor, what my mother went through, this is not anything close to how bad that was, so I just feel like we've always had some antisemitism around," Ullman says.

"We actually get a lot of groups of students coming here after the Holocaust museum and my mother actually used to speak to them," Ullman says. She feels an obligation to continue sharing her family's story with customers who are willing to listen.

"They appreciate the history, knowing where the Jewish people came from in general and what they went through. ... We have the same prejudices against us as many others — as African Americans, as Asians, as all people who feel [discriminated against]."

Ullman has a daughter and son, 24 and 21. They grew up in a family that faithfully celebrated Jewish holidays, observed the Sabbath time of rest and took pride in the heritage of their people. At the same time, she instilled in her children that every human being deserves to be respected. It's a commonsense lesson — written in the Scriptures, reinforced by elders the world over and recited by Ullman to her children their whole lives: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

"It doesn't matter if someone is Jewish or not Jewish, they should be treated the same — I'm all about equal respect, absolutely," she says.

"There are simple things you can do to make people feel good that don't cost you anything but a second of time."

Cooper, the Wiesenthal Center's associate dean, has no illusions about how hard it will be to persuade the most recalcitrant troublemakers to embrace this spirit of mutual understanding. The best he can hope for, he says, is that the Museum of Tolerance will change one mind at a time.

One section of the museum is dedicated to nonviolent movements for justice involving other oppressed people, including Black Americans, to draw a link between the Jewish fight for acceptance and the broader struggle for justice.

That's where I spot Maynard Fuggent one day. I'm so gratified to see a fellow Black American taking in the lessons of another people's yearning to live freely in this world that I approach to say hello.

Fuggent, a fiction writer whose family migrated to California from the South, made a special trip from his home an hour away in Riverside. One reason he came was to remind himself that "there is more than just the conflicts between us."

When the 63-year-old reflects on the fact that Jewish people have survived thousands of years of persecution, and thrived despite the atrocities inflicted upon them in modern times, he can't help but be awed by their perseverance.

"There is this essence of life that is stronger than the circumstances we're in," he says. "To be in a state of elimination, and yet you come through it somehow. ... These are the heroes that I aspire to be."

Fuggent sits on a stool and loses himself in quiet contemplation. Video projections on the wall illuminate him as he listens to King's stirring voice and the sound of Black gospel choirs singing about my people's particular tribulations — and the universal will to overcome.

CALIFORNIA

FRANCINE ORR Los Angeles Times

A PEDESTRIAN in Altadena passes Unincorporated Coffee Roasters' mural, which faces Lincoln Avenue. To longtime residents, the image of people locked in combat is a reminder of the area's past gang violence.

Mural controversy brews

Altadena cafe's artwork evokes pain in the community

BY GRACE TOOHEY

It started as an idea to help foster more public art, after a few new murals in the Altadena community were so well-received.

Victor Ving — who worked on the recent Altadena-themed murals — thought the side of Unincorporated Coffee Roasters' building facing Lincoln Avenue could be the perfect spot to highlight other local, talented artists.

The owners of the local coffee shop jumped on board with the idea, deciding to sponsor a rotating mural project for a new black-and-white design each year.

> 'It's a bummer, and I feel a little bit like I'm the one being attacked. I just tried to do something nice in the neighborhood.'
>
> — CLEON PETERSON,
> Altadena resident and artist who created a similar artwork for Brooklyn Bagel Bakery in Historic Filipinotown

But when the project's second installation went up in mid-February, it almost immediately sparked controversy, and even outrage, from neighbors and others in Altadena's west side. They say the violent image of broad-shouldered figures engaged in conflict, some using weapons, is triggering and offensive — especially for an area that for decades dealt with dangerous gang wars and violence.

"I don't believe in censoring art, I don't believe in canceling art, but I believe there's a place for every art piece — this is not the place," said Shé Shé Yancy, whose home sits feet from the pub-

[See **Mural,** B2]

Deputies' use of stun guns is scrutinized

Prosecutors declined to press charges in a case in which a Taser was deployed on a handcuffed man.

BY KERI BLAKINGER

Two years after a sheriff's deputy fired a stun gun at a handcuffed man outside his family's home, the Los Angeles County district attorney's office declined to file charges because it is unclear if the officer shocked him unintentionally, then lied about it in a report, or if the action was an intentional use of excessive force.

The former charge is a misdemeanor, while the latter can be a misdemeanor or a felony.

After reviewing video of the April 2021 incident and witness statements, prosecutors concluded that they had "insufficient evidence to prove either charge beyond a reasonable doubt," according to a February memo that was recently obtained by The Times.

Now, the matter will go back to the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department for an internal investigation that could lead to disciplinary action.

Adam Marangell, general counsel for the Los Angeles Sheriff's Professional Assn., said he and his deputy client were pleased that prosecutors "correctly chose to decline this case."

Yet criminal justice experts say the case illustrates the difficulty of scrutinizing officers' use of less-lethal weapons, which can be as chaotic and complicated to analyze as that of firearms but typically receives less public attention.

"There are some genuine logistical challenges to figuring out when the officer's use of a Taser may have been excessive," said Jacinta Gau, a University of Central Florida criminal justice professor. "But less-lethal force is not routinely or systemically documented in a way that the public can access, evaluate or hold officers accountable for — and the most simple explanation is that, typically, nobody died during it."

The Sheriff's Department's use of one type of

[See **Stun guns,** B4]

Downtown L.A. hotels emphasize fun, refinement

BY ROGER VINCENT

A high-rise with two hotels and an over-the-top restaurant and bar scene is set to open this month by Crypto.com Arena in downtown Los Angeles, as travelers embrace the road again and the hospitality business climbs out of the crater it sunk into during the pandemic.

The builders hope that events at the arena and the adjacent Los Angeles Convention Center will drive overnight business to the hotels and tempt locals to cavort in the 12 bars, restaurants and clubs that will be a prime feature of the Moxy and AC complex at Figueroa Street and Pico Boulevard.

Moxy and AC are hotel brands operated by Marriott International, which is already the biggest hotelier in the neighborhood, with the JW Marriott and Ritz-Carlton at L.A. Live, as well as an adjacent tower containing Courtyard and Residence Inn hotels.

Marriott put multiple brands in downtown L.A. to serve a range of reasons people travel, such as leisure, business and to attend conferences, said Chief Executive Anthony Capuano. With the new hotels, Marriott will manage 3,200 rooms in six properties.

The hostelries are part of billions of dollars of development that has transformed the once-blighted South Park neighborhood, starting with the 1999 com-

[See **Hotels,** B6]

Outside money shaping Valley race

Three candidates in Council District 6 are benefiting from union, corporate spending.

BY DAKOTA SMITH

Donations and union spending have created a lopsided contest in the race for former Los Angeles City Council President Nury Martinez's seat in the San Fernando Valley.

Three of the seven candidates have raised significant amounts of money or are benefiting from outside spending by unions or corporations in Tuesday's special election.

The other four candidates face an uphill battle. They have far less funding, limiting their ability to buy glossy mailers or hire consultants to spread their message to voters in City Council District 6.

Isaac Kim, a first-time candidate who lives in Van Nuys and runs a men's skin and hair care company, raised just $20,175 through late March. He's relying on free labor to help run his campaign: Kim's mom is in charge of treasurer duties, and his campaign manager is working for free, he said.

Mailers, text messages and door-knocking help introduce him to voters. Still, Kim is realistic about his lack of resources,

"The fact of the matter is the more money you have, you have the capacity to reach more voters," Kim said.

Visibility is particularly important in an election expected to draw a low number of voters. As of Friday afternoon, 6,278 vote-by-mail ballots had been returned to the county, said L.A. County Registrar-Recorder spokesperson Mike Sanchez. In all, more than 118,000 registered voters were sent a ballot.

In a boost for candidate Imelda Padilla, a committee associated with Laborers Local 300 reported spending $25,000 on television adver-

[See **Valley,** B5]

Photographs by FRANCINE ORR Los Angeles Times

ISAAC KIM, left, a candidate for the L.A. City Council's District 6 seat, chats with voter Karen Shaw in Van Nuys. He is realistic about his lack of resources.

IMELDA PADILLA has raised more than $98,000 in donations and more than $150,000 in public money.

Suspect is ID'd in fatal shooting
Woodland Hills man booked on suspicion of murder in the dispute in a San Fernando Valley parking lot. **B3**

Arrest in fight at Trump rally
A San Bernardino man is arrested in an alleged assault with skateboards on two people. **B3**

Official to quit in San Diego
Supervisor Nathan Fletcher says he will resign amid sexual misconduct allegations and civil suit. **B3**

Surfing therapy dog dies at 15
Kids, veterans and the disabled community loved Ricochet. **B3**

Lottery **B2**

CAPITOL JOURNAL

Big Oil evolution at state level — and in my family

Penalizing companies' alleged greed is a sea change in policy

GEORGE SKELTON
IN SACRAMENTO

What's striking about passage of Gov. Gavin Newsom's legislation to penalize Big Oil's alleged greed is the sea change it represents in California policy.

A century ago and well past World War II, the oil industry could do no wrong in California. It was encouraged to drill, baby, drill. And this burgeoning state reaped the economic benefits.

In fact, California is still the only major oil-producing state that doesn't impose an extraction tax for pumping the goo out of the ground. Oil companies do pay property taxes on underground reserves. But it's a much lighter hit than an extraction tax.

In 2006, voters rejected a ballot measure that would have taxed extraction and raised $1 billion annually. The oil industry waged a $95-million opposition campaign. Three years later, the Legislature passed an extraction tax, but Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger vetoed it.

Now, California's governor rails about "greedy" oil companies "fleecing" motorists — "lying and gouging Californians to line their own pockets."

[See **Skelton,** B2]

Altadena residents urge cafe to remove its mural

[**Mural,** from B1]
lic mural. "It's a gut punch every time I pull in and out of my driveway because I'm reminded of the nightmare of the gangs."

Yancy and a growing crowd of neighbors are calling to have the mural taken down.

But the coffee shop owners and the mural's artist stand by the work, calling it a provocative piece intended to prompt conversation and introspection and is subject to everyone's unique interpretation.

"I can't be the guardian of subjectivity. It's not my job to tell people how to interpret art," said Cleon Peterson, the muralist who lives in Altadena. "I try to be a positive influence. I'm not trying to hurt people. ... [But] any good art causes a reaction in people.

"I think it's a measure of something that is impactful," he said.

The piece showing figures using knife-like objects is the latest in a long line of public art that has sparked fierce scrutiny — forcing community leaders to try to strike a balance between creative freedom and sensitivity.

In recent years, officials at a Chula Vista charter school covered an image showing former President Trump's bloody, severed head for being too violent, and in Koreatown, neighbors successfully lobbied for a school mural to come down because it reminded some of the Japanese Imperial battle flag from World War II.

"It's a never-ending debate. This happens worldwide, in every neighborhood," Ving said. "It's public art; not everyone will be happy about it."

The concerned residents have gone to the town council to seek reprieve, but council members say they have no authority over the mural.

"For better or worse, the county has very loose restrictions on the type of murals that can be displayed here," said Altadena Councilmember Chris O'Malley, who represents the district with the mural.

He said the council is working to conduct a more thorough survey of residents who live near the mural to determine if further action should be taken.

Cheri Costley, who lives around the corner from the mural, said the violence in it hits too close to home. Her nephew died in a gang-related shooting in 2011, not far from the mural, and years earlier her sister died after her home — just down the street — was in flames from a Molotov cocktail, part of what officials at the time called a deadly gang war in Los Angeles' suburbs.

"For us to be healing from all the gang violence and for this to come up and be violent," Costley said. "I don't believe that it's for this community."

Yancy, a lifelong Altadena resident, said her family also experienced violence while living in the area. She said she worries how such a piece could affect the community, especially young children who often pass the mural heading to and from two nearby schools.

"I hate talking about it, but the Altadena Blocc Crips ruled this area. ... We lived it," said Yancy, who remembers decades of living in fear of gang violence. "As a Black person, I take offense to it. I see men who are painted black, stabbing and killing each other."

Yancy said she was open to compromise, reaching out to the coffee shop owners and the artist, asking if the image could be displayed without the weapons. She and her neighbors have offered to pay to have it painted over, but the coffee shop owners said they have no plans to change the piece until its year installation is up.

"For those unhappy with the work, the mural changes annually to promote local art in our neighborhood," the owners of Unincorporated Coffee Roasters wrote in a recent statement. "We strive to feature different styles and artists with different points of view. ... We acknowledge that Cleon [Peterson's] work can be interpreted differently than intended but we stand by his artistic expression and encourage the conversations that arise from the art."

Peterson's work has been featured worldwide, and he even has a similar mural on the side of Brooklyn Bagel Bakery in Historic Filipinotown, which has remained on display for more than three years. Yancy said she has nothing against his work and acknowledges his talent, but wishes he had chosen a more positive piece for her neighborhood, like the one he painted underneath the Eiffel Tower in Paris — which depicts similar-style figures, but intertwined in different ways without weapons.

Peterson said he empathizes with people's past trauma but said his piece is almost mundane compared with the amount of other violence in the world, whether in video games or on the nightly news.

"It's a bummer, and I feel a little bit like I'm the one being attacked," Peterson said. "I just tried to do something nice in the neighborhood.

"Whenever you do anything in this world there's going to be criticism — I try to do what I think is right," he said.

He said his work is a social criticism on power and violence, and isn't intended to incite anything but conversation or reflection.

"The idea is to look at the image and look within ourselves and look at our own actions," he said. "The work is about power, and in a way, this kind of initiated a conversation about power in the neighborhood. ... In a sense it's done its job."

Ving, who is working to help identify artists for the shop's murals, said he has modified the project's guidelines to not allow religion, racism or depictions of violence, in addition to profanity or nudity.

"I'm responding to the community already," Ving said. He said he's empathetic to community members who have dealt with past violence but also worries about setting a precedent for this project and future art.

"I'm so torn with this," Ving said. "It starts to tie our hands and not be really representative of the mission of this, which is to give artists creative freedom and foster public art."

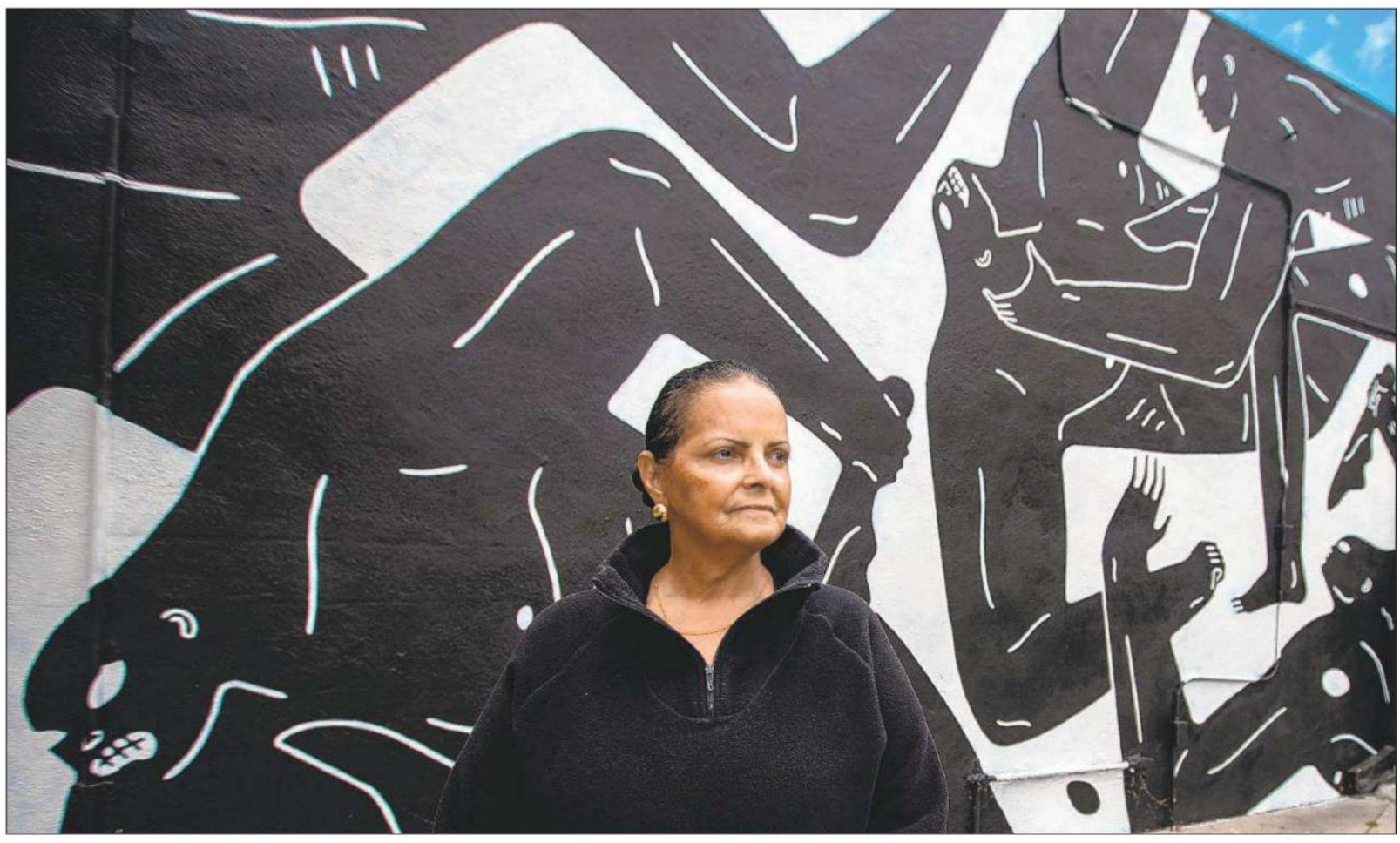
But not all neighbors have been upset by the painting. Rosalinda Hernandez said she often walks to the coffee shop and sometimes will work there for a change in scenery.

She's not one to be offended, she said, but isn't surprised some might not like the weapons depicted.

"I could see why other people would be against the mural," Hernandez said. "I just look at it as art. ... Art is beautiful. I think it's nice because everybody's idea of art is very different."

Ving said no matter how it plays out, he's hopeful the community can move forward together.

"It's sparked a discussion and hopefully a positive one in the long run," Ving said. "Whether or not this stays or goes away, a lesson is learned for everybody. ... It's provocative, but that's what art's supposed to be."



FRANCINE ORR Los Angeles Times

"I BELIEVE there's a place for every art piece — this is not the place," says Shé Shé Yancy, 67, who lives near the public mural in Altadena.

Lottery results

Tonight's Powerball Jackpot:
$159 million
Sales close at 7 p.m.

For Saturday, April 1, 2023

SuperLotto Plus
Mega number is **Bold**

2-9-11-13-46—**Mega 9**
Jackpot: $46 million

Winners per category:

	No. of winners	Amount of prize(s)
5 + Mega	0	—
5	0	—
4 + Mega	19	$1,107
4	414	$84
3 + Mega	753	$41
3	16,417	$9
2 + Mega	9,354	$8
1 + Mega	42,778	$1
Mega only	59,967	$1

Powerball
Powerball number is **bold**

11-19-21-29-52—**Powerball 17**
Jackpot: $147 million

California winners per category:

	No. of winners	Amount of prize(s)
5 + P-ball	0	—
5	0	—
4 + P-ball	1	$33,834
4	56	$302
3 + P-ball	103	$170
3	3,150	$6
2 + P-ball	2,362	$8
1 + P-ball	17,233	$5
P-ball only	40,222	$4

Winning jackpot ticket(s) sold in other states: None

For Sunday, April 2, 2023

Fantasy Five: 9-10-18-29-32

Daily Four: 5-4-6-1

Daily Three (midday): 6-5-9

Daily Three (evening): 2-0-2

Daily Derby:
(8) Gorgeous George
(7) Eureka
(9) Winning Spirit
Race time: 1:47.80

Results on the internet:
www.latimes.com/lottery
General information:
(800) 568-8379
(Results not available at this number)

Climate change is shifting attitudes about oil

[**Skelton,** from B1]
The bill Newsom signed last week authorizes the California Energy Commission, which he appoints, to regulate oil refinery profits. It can establish a cap on profits and sock refineries that exceed it with what he calls a "price-gouging penalty."

This governor brags about bringing "Big Oil to their knees."

Newsom's scorn — and the Democratic-dominated Legislature's — is in sharp contrast to the hospitable cheering-on that the oil industry heard from Sacramento throughout most of the 20th century.

Only one Democratic lawmaker voted against Newsom's bill, and she was promptly punished by Assembly Speaker Anthony Rendon (D-Lakewood). New Assemblymember Jasmeet Bains presumably represented her oil-rich Kern County district's views by opposing the measure. The speaker then yanked her off the influential Business and Professions Committee.

That wouldn't have happened in the past on an anti-oil bill.

But today, bashing and voting against the oil industry apparently plays well with Democratic voters in deep blue California.

First, people are concerned about climate change and planet-altering greenhouse gas emissions spewed by gasoline automobiles.

In a poll last year by the Public Policy Institute of California, about half the people surveyed said they'd considered buying an electric vehicle. And by 3 to 1, they prioritized developing alternative energy — wind, solar, hydrogen — over expanding oil and gas production.

Second, there's greater public angst over oil company actions that hit motorists directly. We pay far more than the national average for a gallon of gasoline — $2.61 more at one point last year when our cost at the pump exceeded $6.

Compare that with the 25 cents or so I initially paid for a gallon of gas in the 1950s when oil was a welcomed job producer in California.

Part of the difference between what we and the rest of the country pay is attributable to state and local taxes. There are also fees to fund environmental programs, mostly to fight climate change. And there's the cost of mixing a special anti-smog blend of fuel.

But those costs don't account for all the extra price at the pump. Now, the Energy Commission will have the legal authority to dig into refineries' books and discover the mystery.

And maybe it can find out why just before every three-day weekend — especially during highly traveled summer months — the pump price suddenly escalates. But I think we already know that answer: Oil companies can get away with it because we need to fill up.

Back in the day, oil played a huge role in developing California and boosting workers into the middle class.

In 1903, California became the No. 1 oil-producing state in the nation. We traded that position back and forth with Oklahoma up until the Great Depression, when a glut developed because people didn't drive so much. Oil production slowed, then escalated again during World War II. But today we're only the seventh-largest producer of crude oil.

In the 1920s, much of the Los Angeles Basin was covered with a forest of wooden oil derricks. Many of us still remember an active oil well on the Beverly Hills High School campus. Derricks dotted the Summerland Beach area just south of Santa Barbara.

California pumped 36% of the nation's oil in 1923. Today, 100 years later, it's down to 3%. Those in power can hardly wait, it seems, to rid the state of its remaining production.

My own family has directly experienced the dramatic change in public policy and attitudes toward oil.

My dad left his family's depressed Tennessee farm in the 1920s because he heard there were decent paying jobs in California's booming oil fields. There were.

A large Skelton clan came with him — his dad, brother, two uncles and some cousins. Most went back to Tennessee farming when oil companies laid off workers during the Depression. Fortunately, my dad stayed, and I was born in exquisite Santa Barbara.

With only an eighth-grade education — there was no high school near his isolated farm — Dad supported a family on an oil worker's pay, rising through the ranks from roustabout to tool pusher and finally assistant foreman at Shell's Ventura lease. We were proud of him.

I even became an oil worker my first summer out of high school. But I took a 33% pay cut to work for the Ventura Star-Free Press the next summer. My best investment ever.

I've had my own evolution on oil: Moving from strong support of offshore drilling to adamant opposition because of repeated, calamitous spills.

Today, one of my dad's granddaughters — my daughter — is trying to rid California and the world of fossil fuel because, she believes, it threatens to destroy the planet. She'd like to eliminate her grandpa's occupation.

She's a Biden administration advisor trying to find clean-energy jobs for fossil-fuel workers.

Dad probably would have been fine with that, but cautioned her not to be rambunctious. Gas cars are going to be around for a while yet.

CAROLYN COLE Los Angeles Times

BASHING and voting against the oil industry apparently plays well now with Democratic voters in California. Above, there are more than 1,100 producing wells in the McKittrick oil field near that Kern County town.

Suspect in fatal shooting named

Mark Connole, 34, is arrested in Valley attack that left one dead, three wounded.

By Louis Sahagún

Genaro Molina Los Angeles Times

POLICE investigate the Saturday afternoon shooting at Fallbrook Center. It evolved from a dispute over a gang-related drug deal in the parking lot, police say.

The Los Angeles Police Department on Sunday identified one of the four suspects involved in a shooting Saturday afternoon that left one man dead and three others wounded in a San Fernando Valley parking lot.

Homicide investigators said Mark Connole, 34, of Woodland Hills was booked at Van Nuys jail on suspicion of murder, and bail has been set at $2 million.

Police said the incident occurred about 3:45 p.m. Saturday during a dispute over a gang-related drug deal in the parking lot of Fallbrook Center, a retail complex in the 22900 block of Vanowen Street that is home to a Target, Home Depot, Walmart and Trader Joe's.

Connole produced a handgun, police said, and began firing at the victims, three of whom sustained injuries that weren't life-threatening and were taken to a hospital.

Los Angeles Fire Department paramedics pronounced a fourth victim dead at the scene. The victim's identity is being withheld until the family is notified, police said.

As officers arrived, Connole allegedly fled in a red Honda and was spotted by a police helicopter. Officers in the chopper saw him switch vehicles and directed police in patrol cars to the area to block an escape.

Connole was detained after a short pursuit and taken into custody without incident, police said. A firearm was recovered and he was arrested, police said.

In a statement Sunday, police said, "detectives have canvassed the area and are investigating all leads. Detectives request the assistance of any witnesses present at the Fallbrook shopping center during the incident to come forward."

"Any persons who captured cellphone video of the altercation before the incident or the shooting are requested to notify detectives," police said.

Anyone with information is asked to contact LAPD Valley Bureau Homicide detectives at (818) 374-9550. Those wishing to remain anonymous can call the L.A. Regional Crime Stoppers at (800) 222-8477) or go to www.lacrimestoppers.org.

Times staff writers Richard Winton and Melissa Gomez contributed to this report.

Supervisor to quit San Diego board

He faces sexual misconduct claims and a lawsuit. Agency to weigh its next steps.

By Deborah Sullivan Brennan and Jeff McDonald

Adriana Heldiz San Diego Union-Tribune

NATHAN FLETCHER said he plans to remain in office but on medical leave until he departs May 15.

San Diego County Supervisor Nathan Fletcher said Thursday that he will resign effective May 15, amid sexual misconduct allegations and a civil lawsuit that have thrown into free fall what had just four days earlier seemed a rising political career.

He plans to remain in office but on medical leave until then, he said, after announcing his plans to resign late Wednesday night. He had said March 26 that he was ending a campaign for state Senate to seek treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder and alcohol abuse.

The Board of Supervisors will decide May 2 whether to appoint a candidate to fill his seat or hold a special election to replace him, county officials said.

Board Chair Nora Vargas did not say which option she will propose for replacing Fletcher, but said she agreed with his decision to resign.

"I'm deeply disturbed by the allegations against Supervisor Fletcher and support his resignation," Vargas said. "We must work to create a safe environment for all the dedicated people who work throughout San Diego County, and I won't accept anything less."

The announcement of his resignation came hours after Fletcher acknowledged inappropriate behavior with Grecia Figueroa, a former Metropolitan Transit System public relations officer who accused Fletcher of kissing and groping her in a lawsuit filed in San Diego Superior Court.

Fletcher denied the assault and harassment allegations but resigned Tuesday from the MTS board, which oversees the San Diego trolley and bus system and which he had chaired.

"The strain on my wife and family over the past week has been immense and unbearable," Fletcher wrote in a statement late Wednesday night. "A combination of my personal mistakes plus false accusations has created a burden that my family shouldn't have to bear."

Fletcher's initial announcement Sunday had prompted an outpouring of support on social media from constituents and well-wishers who applauded his decision to seek mental health treatment.

But the mood turned critical Wednesday after he acknowledged his interactions with Figueroa.

Supervisor Jim Desmond, a Republican, posted a statement Thursday saying he was "concerned and disappointed by the disturbing allegations of sexual misconduct" against Fletcher, and calling his resignation "a necessary step for the future of San Diego County."

Board of Supervisors Vice Chair Terra Lawson-Remer did not comment on the allegations or on Fletcher's resignation, but said in a statement that the board would continue to operate effectively in his absence.

"I have every confidence in our chairwoman and look forward to working with my colleagues to keep delivering for our region," Lawson-Remer said.

Republican Supervisor Joel Anderson declined to comment.

At least two staffers in his county office resigned Wednesday as a result of the accusations, even though Fletcher broadly denied the allegations in the lawsuit.

Policy director Emily Wier, who had served with Fletcher since 2019, stepped down, as did senior policy advisor Dr. Eric Rafla-Yuan. Both confirmed their resignations but declined to comment.

In his resignation message, Fletcher thanked his supporters and constituents.

"I am proud of what we accomplished together," he said. "My decision today is solely based on what is best for my family."

Fletcher's wife, former state Assemblymember Lorena Gonzalez, registered her support for her husband in a social media post late Wednesday night.

"I love my husband," Gonzalez said on Twitter. "He has acknowledged his mistakes & I believe his name will be cleared of false accusations. Still, I asked him to resign to lessen the strain on our family."

Former state Assemblymember Lori Saldaña called for the San Diego County Democratic Party to take action, noting that Fletcher is the second high-profile local Democrat accused of sexual misconduct in just the last year.

Former county party Chair Will Rodriguez-Kennedy stepped down from his position in May after being accused of rape. After an investigation, the district attorney declined to file charges.

Saldaña characterized Fletcher's behavior toward Figueroa as an "abuse of power" because of his position of authority in the organization.

"When you have a powerful person coercing, expecting, demanding, something from a subordinate, it makes it very difficult for that person to consent without some form of pressure being placed on them," she said.

Under the party's bylaws and code of conduct, Central Committee members can be removed for causes including unwelcome advances, retaliation or alcohol or substance abuse, among others, Saldaña noted.

She urged acting party Chair Becca Taylor to ask members to vote on whether to remove Fletcher and Rodriguez-Kennedy from their committee positions.

Taylor said in a statement that she supported Fletcher's resignation from his county office but did not respond to Saldaña's request.

Figueroa said in her lawsuit that Fletcher first began interacting with her on social media in 2021. Within several months, she said, he began inviting her to private meetings and kissed and groped her against her will.

She said she was fired from her job at MTS on Feb. 6 — the day Fletcher announced his campaign for state Senate — in what she believes was retaliation.

The transit agency said Figueroa's termination was "solely related to ongoing performance concerns" and said Fletcher had no role in that decision. It said the board has assigned the labor law firm Paul Plevin Quarles to investigate her allegations.

"None of the decision makers involved in this personnel decision were aware of the allegations about Nathan Fletcher until after the decision to terminate," the transit agency said in a statement.

"Neither Mr. Fletcher nor any other MTS Board Member was aware of or involved in the decision to terminate Ms. Figueroa."

No sooner had Fletcher announced plans last month to seek termed-out Sen. Toni Atkins' state Senate seat than he became the immediate favorite in the race.

But his announcement March 26 that he was ending his campaign, followed by his plan to resign as supervisor, leaves wide open the race not only for Atkins' Senate seat but also one for the 4th Supervisorial District, which he now represents.

The Board of Supervisors must decide whether to appoint a successor, hold a special election or choose a combination of those options. The board has not indicated how it intends to fill the upcoming vacancy.

The cost and timeline for a special election vary depending on the jurisdiction, the number of registered voters and whether it is an all-mail election or would involve in-person voting, among other factors, San Diego County Registrar of Voters spokesperson Antonia Hutzell said Thursday.

Although the registrar does not have a cost estimate for a special election to replace Fletcher, the most recent special election for the 80th Assembly District — to fill the seat vacated by Gonzalez — cost $2.3 million, Hutzell said.

Potential candidates are already throwing their names in the hat for Fletcher's seat.

Amy Reichert, who lost a challenge to Fletcher in November, is considering a second run.

"I do hope there is a special election," Reichert said Thursday. "I think the people deserve to vote for their elected representative. I am absolutely interested in running for county Board of Supervisors."

Veterans advocate Janessa Goldbeck had previously announced plans to run for Fletcher's open seat should he be elected to the state Senate but said Thursday she's prepared either to run for the seat or to apply for an appointment now.

"This obviously changes the timeline, but I'm not deterred; I'm doubling down," Goldbeck said Thursday, calling Fletcher's behavior "deeply disturbing and disappointing.

"As a former victims advocate, I fought for the rights of men and women who were victimized by people in positions of power. And now more than ever I think San Diego County needs leadership that truly lives up to our values."

Brennan and McDonald write for the San Diego Union-Tribune. Staff writer Kristen Taketa of the Union-Tribune contributed to this report.

RICOCHET

San Diego's beloved surf therapy dog, ambassador

By Natallie Rocha

SAN DIEGO — Ricochet, San Diego's favorite surfing therapy dog, has caught her final wave.

The 15-year-old golden retriever — a pioneer of canine-assisted surf therapy who helped countless veterans and kids — died on Friday, owner Judy Fridono said Saturday. Ricochet was diagnosed with liver cancer in August but began experiencing painful symptoms on Friday.

"I made a promise to Ricochet a long time ago that I wouldn't let her suffer," Fridono said in an announcement. "She took her first breath in my hand when she was born ... and she took her last breath in my hand yesterday."

Ricochet was raised to be a service dog, but the energetic pup was more fond of chasing birds than assisting with household chores, Fridono said.

In 2009, the canine found her calling.

That was the year Ricochet got on a surfboard with local quadriplegic surfer Patrick Ivison. A viral video of the encounter got more than 6 million views on YouTube.

"That day she hopped on the board with Patrick, she was reborn," Fridono said in a 2012 interview with the San Diego Union-Tribune. "She kept running back to the water with her tail wagging like she could finally tell me, 'This is what I want to do.' "

Throughout her life, the beloved dog touched the lives of kids with special needs, wounded service members and families of fallen veterans. Ricochet was known as an affectionate companion and a shameless belly-rub beggar and had an intuition for people who needed a cuddle, Fridono said.

Notably, the furry do-gooder helped raise $1 million for charity and the donation of more than 1 million bowls of food for homeless animals.

Ricochet also worked as a goal-directed therapy dog for Pawsitive Teams and the Naval Medical Center San Diego, where she supported service members and veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder, trauma, anxiety and other emotional challenges.

Her work brought numerous awards, media attention and a loyal fan base on social media. The pup had more than 141,000 followers on Instagram and more than 270,000 on Facebook.

Ricochet's legacy will live on through the sponsorship of Jose Martinez, an Army veteran and parasurfer, and through donations to adaptive surfing organizations.

"People believe in Ricochet's mission ... she didn't do it alone," Fridono said. "Her supporters are an extension of her legacy and her roots in philanthropy and helping others heal through canine intervention and therapy.

"Now that she's gone, I don't want people to be sad. I want them to celebrate and continue supporting what she started."

Rocha writes for the San Diego Union-Tribune.

Judy Fridono and KillerImage.com

MAKING A SPLASH
Raised to be a service dog, the sprightly Ricochet would find her calling on a surfboard on the waves.

Man arrested after fight at Trump rally in Huntington Beach

San Bernardino resident was held in attack with skateboard on two demonstrators.

By Melissa Gomez

A 33-year-old San Bernardino man was arrested after a fight broke out during a Saturday protest near the Huntington Beach Pier, where supporters of former President Trump gathered after the announcement he had been indicted.

Daniel Salvador Angulo Serrano was arrested around 1:30 p.m. after a fight broke out near the pier where Trump supporters had gathered, according to Huntington Beach police. He was arrested on suspicion of assault with a deadly weapon that was not a firearm, according to police records.

"We did have, for the most part, a peaceful protest," said Jennifer Carey, a spokesperson for Huntington Beach. A person who suffered "minor injuries" related to the fight was taken to a hospital as a precaution, Carey said.

The Times previously reported that two demonstrators at the protest were hit with skateboards, and one of the victims had been leading chants that denounced the indictment against the former president.

The victim was bleeding from the head. One demonstrator who said he witnessed the attack on fellow demonstrators told The Times that the attack was unprovoked.

Last week, Trump's attorneys confirmed the former president had been indicted in New York City on charges related to an alleged payment made to a porn actor during the final days of the 2016 presidential campaign. It is the first time that a former U.S. president has been criminally prosecuted.

MEL MELCON Los Angeles Times

THE L.A. COUNTY Sheriff's Department has paid millions of dollars in settlements over deaths related to stun guns. The Civilian Oversight Commission has begun a study of the department's use of the weapons.

ALLEN J. SCHABEN Los Angeles Times

THAT'S SOME RANGE

With snow-laced mountains towering in front of him, a surfer rides a wave at Bolsa Chica State Beach. A cold front will drop southward across the region Monday, bringing cooler weather and strong winds.

Deputies' use of stun guns is scrutinized

[**Stun guns,** from B1]

less-lethal force, stun guns, is set to come under more scrutiny. In March, the Civilian Oversight Commission put out a call for public input on the issue.

"There's obviously been some settlements around this area in the last five years," said commissioner Luis Garcia.

In 2021, the county paid $2 million to the family of a man who died in 2018 after deputies shocked him with a stun gun. Last year, the county agreed to pay $3.8 million to the family of a man who died in 2015 in Willowbrook after being shocked by a deputy. A few months later, the county settled for more than $16.2 million after a Maywood man died when he was beaten and shocked by deputies responding to a call from his mother, who said he was in the midst of a mental health crisis.

The April 18, 2021, incident detailed in prosecutors' February memo began when two Lynwood deputies responded to an early-morning call about a family disturbance.

The caller said his brother had broken into the home and refused to leave. The alleged intruder — who is not named in the memo — hadn't lived there for about five years.

The caller said his brother was usually "on drugs and unpredictable." This time, the caller feared that his brother would assault their elderly grandmother.

The deputies went to the backyard and started calling the man's name. When they spotted him, they ordered him to come out with his hands up.

He refused, and as the standoff unfolded, two more deputies — John Hunziker and his partner — arrived. Not long after that, the man came out with his hands up but refused to turn around. Three deputies moved in for a "team takedown" while ordering him to stop resisting.

"In a second, in a second," the man said, according to the memo.

"I'm going to tase you," Hunziker warned.

The man wriggled on the ground and started to kick at another deputy's legs and lower back, so Hunziker shocked him three times, prosecutors wrote. The man screamed that he couldn't breathe and kept kicking. The deputies put him in handcuffs.

"I can't breathe," the man repeated. "Don't do that again."

At that point, he stopped kicking, but the deputies didn't remove the Taser prongs from his shirt. Seconds later, Hunziker shocked the man a fourth time.

"The fourth tasing appears accidental," the memo said. Video shows that the deputy didn't aim the stun gun that time and, according to the memo, seemed surprised that it had deployed.

Prosecutors said the only evidence that the fourth shock was intentional appeared in Hunziker's report, where he wrote that he deployed the weapon because the man "appeared as if he was going to kick again."

Despite the chaotic arrest, the man sustained only minor injuries and was jailed for three misdemeanors: two counts of resisting arrest and one of aggravated trespass.

Seven months later, the Sheriff's Department sent the case to the district attorney's office so prosecutors could decide whether to file criminal charges.

"There are two reasonable conclusions to draw from the circumstantial evidence," prosecutors wrote in their analysis. "Hunziker discharged the taser accidentally, or Hunziker discharged the taser intentionally. Based on the totality of the circumstances, the more reasonable conclusion was that it was an accident."

That meant that a charge of assault by a public officer didn't fit. To charge Hunziker with making a false statement in a report, prosecutors would have to prove that the fourth shock was not intentional, but it wasn't clear that they could do so.

> 'Based on the totality of the circumstances, the more reasonable conclusion was that it was an accident.'
>
> — prosecutors' analysis of an April 2021 stun gun incident

"This incident presents a situation where it cannot be proven beyond a reasonable doubt that the fourth Tasing was intentional, and thus constitutes excessive force, or that it was an accident and Hunziker made a material false statement in his police report," the memo concluded.

To Sean Kennedy, who chairs the Civilian Oversight Committee, the case illustrates that prosecutors can be a barrier to untangling issues of deputy accountability.

The memo, he said, "shows how far the D.A. will go to avoid concluding that a deputy made a false statement." Aside from the prosecutors' own conclusions about the chain of events, Kennedy said, the fact that one of the other deputies, whose hands were shocked during the fourth tasing, made no mention of it in his report "is further evidence of an intentional cover-up."

The district attorney's office did not respond to an emailed request for comment.

Garcia said a report that will include the newly collected public commentary will go before the commission, which can consider moving forward with additional study.

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SUMMONS
(CITACION JUDICIAL)
Case Number (Numero del Caso): 22BBCV00559

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NOTICE! You have been sued. The court may decide against you without your being heard unless you respond within 30 days. Read the information below.

You have 30 CALENDAR DAYS after this summons and legal papers are served on you to file a written response at this court and have a copy served on the plaintiff. A letter or phone call will not protect you. Your written response must be in proper legal form if you want the court to hear your case. There may be a court form that you can use for your response. You can find these court forms and more information at the California Courts Online Self-Help Center (www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp), your county law library, or the courthouse nearest you. If you cannot pay the filing fee, ask the court clerk for a fee waiver form. If you do not file your response on time, you may lose the case by default, and your wages, money, and property may be taken without further warning from the court.

There are other legal requirements. You may want to call an attorney right away. If you do not know an attorney, you may want to call an attorney referral service. If you cannot afford an attorney, you may be eligible for free legal services from a nonprofit legal services program. You can locate these nonprofit groups at the California Legal Services Web Site (www.lawhelpcalifornia.org), the California Courts Online Self-Help Center (www.courtinfo.ca.gov/selfhelp), or by contacting your local court or county bar association. NOTE: The court has a statutory lien for waived fees and costs on any settlement or arbitration award of $10,000 or more in a civil case. The court's lien must be paid before the court will dismiss the case.

¡AVISO! Lo han demandado. Si no responde dentro de 30 dias, la corte puede decider en su contra sin escuchar su version. Lea la informacion a continuacion.

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The name and address of the court is: (El nombre y direccion de la corte es):
Los Angeles Superior Court - Burbank Courthouse
300 East Olive
Burbank , California 91502

The name, address, and telephone number of plaintiff's attorney, or plaintiff without an attorney, is: (El nombre, la direccion y el numero de telefono del abogado del demandante, o del demandante que no tiene abogado, es):
Davide Golia
11440 West Bernardo Court, Suite 300
San Diego, California 92127
(619) 738-1870

Date: (Fecha) March 14, 2023

David W. Slayton Clerk (Secretario)
N. Le Deputy (Adjunto)

Special Occasions

Welcome To The World, Michaiah
Emmitt Obode and Yue Jin are excited to announce the arrival of their firstborn son, Michaiah Obode.
Born on March 23rd, 2023, at California Hospital Medical Center in Downtown Los Angeles, Michaiah - Micah for short - weighed 7 lbs. 5 oz. and was 20 in. long at the time of his birth.

LEGAL NOTICES 1300

Legal Notices

Public Notice of a Special Meeting for the Santa Monica Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency
This is a Notice that the Santa Monica Basin Groundwater Sustainability Agency (GSA), which is composed of the cities of Santa Monica, Culver City, Beverly Hills, and Los Angeles through its Department of Water and Power, and the County of Los Angeles, is holding a Special Public Meeting on Tuesday, April 4, 2023, at 1:00 PM at Santa Monica City Hall East to discuss pending litigation (closed session). City Hall East is located at 1685 Main Street in Santa Monica and the entrance to City Hall East is located on Olympic Boulevard next to (west from) the Public Safety Building at 333 Olympic Drive, Santa Monica, CA, 90401. Parking for City Hall East is located at Civic Center Parking Structure located at 333 Civic Center Drive, Santa Monica, CA 90401, across Olympic Blvd from City Hall East.
Materials and information about the meeting may be obtained at the GSA website: https://www.santamonica.gov/gsp
Please contact Dr. Lisette A. Gold (Lisette.Gold@santamonica.gov) for questions or comments on this Notice or any of its contents.

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By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

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Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

(Answers tomorrow)

Saturday's Jumbles: DIGIT PRONE BAFFLE PLIGHT
Answer: When their newspaper printed the Jumble upside-down on April 1, they — FLIPPED FOR IT

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LAPD searches for suspects after two men are fatally shot

An 'argument broke out' early Sunday at an intersection in Hollywood, police say.

BY MELISSA GOMEZ

Two men were killed in a shooting Sunday morning in Hollywood, police said.

The unidentified men, who were in their 20s, were among a group of people who were gathered shortly after midnight at the intersection of La Brea Avenue and Sunset Boulevard when an "argument broke out" and someone pulled out a gun and fired "numerous rounds," Los Angeles Police Department spokesman Jeff Lee said.

Two men were struck. One died at the scene; the other died later in a hospital.

The victims were from the Lancaster/Palmdale area, according to ABC 7.

Two men from the group ran from the scene, Lee said. Police are searching for them.

Less funding hurts 4 candidates' chances

[**Valley,** from B1]
tisements to support her campaign. The union represents construction, maintenance and plant workers.

Two outside committees are also backing Padilla and have reported spending a combined $92,300. One of the committees has received money from the American Beverage Assn. and PepsiCo.

Separately, Padilla has raised more than $98,000 in donations and secured more than $150,600 in public money through a city program that allows candidates who collect enough small donations from residents in the district to receive matching funds.

Padilla spokesperson Lauren Perez-Rangel credited the candidate's support to her work with the L.A. Youth Council, the Sun Valley Neighborhood Council and other local organizations.

"Imelda's edge comes from organizing in the district for the last 20 years," Perez-Rangel said.

Another candidate, Marisa Alcaraz, a top aide to City Councilmember Curren Price, has raised more than $161,200. Outside groups, including committees backed by United Food & Commercial Workers Local 700, the Southwest Regional Council of Carpenters and a real estate development company, respectively, have reported spending a combined $110,825 to support her campaign.

Alcaraz worked on council legislation two years ago mandating that larger grocery store chains pay employees extra money because of their work during the pandemic. UFCW, which represents grocery workers, spearheaded the initiative.

UFCW 770 drew scrutiny in the District 6 race after the committee put out 14,200 mailers in support of Alcaraz that incorrectly stated she was endorsed by the Spanish-language newspaper La Opinión.

Armando Varela, executive editor of La Opinión, called for a public retraction, noting the paper hasn't endorsed a candidate.

"We regret the error and offer our apologies to La Opinión," said UFCW spokeswoman Bertha Rodriguez. "We would like to clarify that our political action committee functions autonomously, without any direct affiliation or coordination with the Marisa Alcaraz campaign."

Katherine Tattersfield, volunteer field coordinator for candidate Antoinette Scully, said the incident "demonstrates why communications should come directly from campaigns so that there's accountability for messaging."

Another District 6 candidate, Marco Santana, director of engagement at L.A. Family Housing, has raised more than $89,020 and received $115,578 in matching funds.

A committee associated with the Los Angeles Police Protective League, which represents rank-and-file officers, has spent more than $70,400 opposing Santana. One mailer from the committee highlights Santana's opposition to 41.18, the city law that allows council members to designate areas as off-limits to homeless camps. It includes a quote from Santana in which he said he would "definitely look at repealing" 41.18.

Other candidates, including Scully, a self-described police abolitionist, oppose 41.18. Scully has raised just $13,992, according to the latest filings.

Tom Saggau, a spokesperson for the Police Protective League, said that the union views Santana as the "most viable" of the candidates who oppose 41.18. The union supports the law.

"It's not just cops" who support 41.18,Saggau said. "For a lot of Angelenos, homeless encampments next to schools and day-care care centers are something that they don't want to see."

The police union spent heavily in last year's Council District 11 race, opposing candidate Erin Darling, who ultimately lost to Traci Park.

Santana, reacting to the mailer, said, "I'm clearly a threat to those who want City Hall to stay the same and to have this council seat filled with an insider who will continue to put the politics before the needs of our communities.

"It is ironic that the PPL is attacking me since my public safety plan has always been to create ways that will allow LAPD officers to focus more of their time on preventing violent crime — something the PPL says it wants."

Meanwhile, candidate Rose Grigoryan, who runs a marketing company, has raised about $59,986. In an email, Grigoryan said she isn't "approaching special interests that I would owe something to later on."

Candidate Douglas Sierra, who formerly worked at management consulting firm Monitor Deloitte, has raised about $11,670 but spent more than $21,000, according to the latest filings.

Photographs by FRANCINE ORR Los Angeles Times

MARISA ALCARAZ, left, running for former L.A. City Council President Nury Martinez's seat in the San Fernando Valley, and Assemblywoman Wendy Carrillo address Alcaraz volunteers in Panorama City.

EDITH GONZALEZ, center, and others head out to campaign for Alcaraz, a top aide to City Councilmember Curren Price who has raised more than $161,200. She worked on grocery worker legislation two years ago.

'The fact of the matter is the more money you have, you have the capacity to reach more voters.'

— ISAAC KIM, *first-time L.A. City Council candidate*

THEOPHILUS 'THEO' LOGAN, 1917 - 2023

Realtor made homeownership possible for Black San Diegans

BY NATALLIE ROCHA

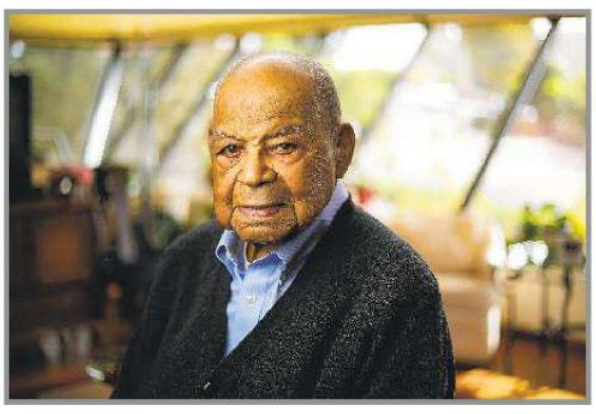
Theophilus "Theo" Logan is best known for his work in local real estate, where he helped make homeownership possible for Black San Diegans and other minorities at a time when redlining and segregation made it nearly impossible to secure financing. But to those who were close to him, Logan was known as a man of great faith, a legend and the embodiment of a gentleman.

Logan, 105, died March 16 of natural causes at his home in Bankers Hill, surrounded by family. He died a month before his 106th birthday.

Daughter Barbara Logan recalls that he never left the house without a hat — the kind you'd see men wearing in the 1940s — and more generally was known to be a "dapper dresser." Family members joked that you'd never catch him wearing jeans in public, although he had a few pairs to wear around the house.

Dee Sanford, a close family friend who grew up with the Logans, said he was a wise man who was "larger than life" in stature. She never heard him say a bad word about anyone.

"He was always calm, cool, collected, well-dressed, very dignified; just a presence," said Sanford, who added that Theo Logan is the reason her father moved to San Diego. "He had a presence like no one else."



K.C. ALFRED San Diego Union-Tribune

'VERY DIGNIFIED; JUST A PRESENCE'
The equal treatment of people was at the center of Theophilus "Theo" Logan's life's work.

And though he took great care in his physical appearance, Logan was not one to judge by looks. The equal treatment of people was important to Logan, and at the center of his life's work.

"What he did was not an easy thing to do," Sanford said. "He found there was a need and that the banking system was unjust and he felt that we should all be entitled to the same opportunities and to build generational wealth."

After serving in the military, Logan opened his firm, Logan Realty, in Logan Heights at a time in the 1960s when redlining and prejudice kept people of color from homeownership.

Though some commercial lenders refused to write mortgages for minorities, Logan figured out another way and helped people secure financing through Federal Housing Administration and Veterans Affairs loans.

He established himself in the real estate industry and joined the San Diego Board of Realtors — today's Greater San Diego Assn. of Realtors — and chaired its Neighborhood Revitalization Committee. In 1978, he became the first Black American elected as a local realty board president.

Logan was also committed to uplifting young Black men through his 87-year tenure as a member of the Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity. Samuel Knight, his fraternity brother in the San Diego chapter, said this is part of Logan's legacy.

"Anybody who knew him and met him for any length of time just loved him and just loved to be in his presence. I mean, his aura just permeated the room," Knight said.

Born in Lima, Okla., on April 30, 1917, Logan was the oldest of five children. His father worked on building and maintaining tracks for the Rock Island railroad and his mother was a schoolteacher.

He grew up visiting his grandparents in San Diego in the 1920s; he adored the city and called it "one of the jewels of America."

He graduated in 1939 with a liberal arts degree from the historically Black college Lincoln University in Oxford, Penn. Logan moved to San Diego in September 1941 with the intention of working in the local welfare department.

But when war broke out three months later, he was drafted into the Army and shipped to Italy, where he was a platoon leader and later served as a liaison officer. He was in the 92nd Infantry Division, the only all-Black unit to see combat in World War II, which inherited the reputation of the famed Buffalo Soldiers' cavalry regiment that fought in the Indian Wars of the late 19th century. He also served in Japan and Korea.

Logan taught from 1955 to 1959 at another historically Black school, Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Mo. It was there that he met and married his wife, Martha, who earned a law degree in 1972 and was one of a handful of Black women attorneys in San Diego. They had two children, William and Barbara, both born in Germany, where Logan was stationed a second time from 1960 to 1962. His wife, two children, four grandchildren, one great-grandson and many nieces and nephews survive him.

Logan retired after 20 years of service and received numerous awards, including a Bronze Star Medal with Oak Leaf Cluster, during his service in World War II and Korea.

Last year, he was honored with the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Human Dignity Award from the Jackie Robinson YMCA.

Rocha writes for the San Diego Union-Tribune. U-T freelancer Roger Showley contributed to this report.

OBITUARY NOTICES

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Los Angeles Times

DIEBOLD, Steven Joseph
April 16, 1960 - March 23, 2023

Steven Diebold peacefully entered into God's tender embrace on Thursday, March 23, 2023. Steve was born in Santa Monica, California where he resided for most of his young adult life. He is preceded in death by his parents, Herb and Helen Diebold. Steve leaves behind his brother, Bill, and his sister, Celeste Von Der Ahe, as well as twenty nieces and nephews.

During his life, Steve was active in ARC (Activities, Recreation, & Care) devoted to those individuals with disabilities. He had a great love of dogs and often would walk with them to give them exercise. He was also an avid Laker Fan!

Steve graduated from high school in San Diego. He loved to travel and cruise and most of all, relax in the sun with an Ice Cream Cone.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that a donation be sent to: A.R.C., 6456 Whitsett Avenue, North Hollywood, 91606, c/o Jane Sarcher.

O'Connor Mortuary (949) 581-4300
www.oconnormortuary.com

PEMSTEIN, Anita Louise
Mount Sinai Memorial Parks
Hollywood Hills 800-600-0076
www.mountsinaiparks.org

To place an obituary ad please go online to:

latimes.com/placeobituary

or call
1-800-234-4444

Los Angeles Times

THE WEATHER

Today in Southern California

Turning cooler and windier: A cold front will drop southward across the region on Monday, bringing cooler weather with strong, gusty winds developing. The strongest winds will be in the mountains. Snow levels will also drop significantly, with minor snow accumulations possible in the passes. Drier and sunnier weather is set to return on Tuesday, although it will remain quite cool.

5-day forecasts

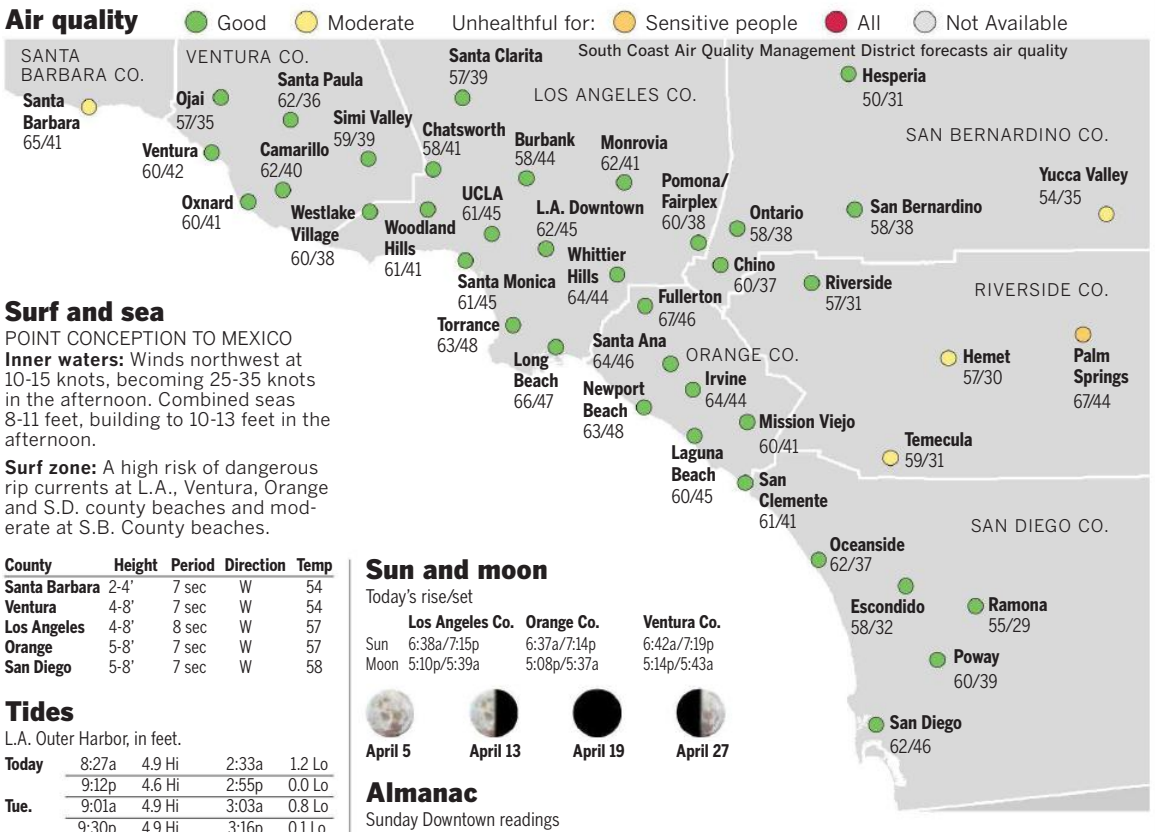
High/low temperatures are average forecasts for entire zone.

	L.A. Basin		Valleys		Beaches		Mountains		Deserts	
Today	62|45		57|41		61|45		36|17		67|44	
	Breezy in p.m.		More wind		Clouds, sun		Colder		Breezy in p.m.	
Tuesday	Sunny; cool	64/44	Mostly sunny	60/44	Mostly sunny	60/45	Sunny; cold	39/22	Sunny; cool	69/48
Wednesday	Mostly sunny	67/48	Mostly sunny	67/48	Mostly sunny	61/48	Sunny	43/24	Sunny	73/56
Thursday	Clouds, sun	74/51	Some sun	75/52	Clouds, sun	68/50	Mostly cloudy	50/25	Warmer	82/61
Friday	Sunny	79/54	Sunny	79/53	Sunny	73/52	Sunny	55/26	Sunny	87/64

Air quality

Good · Moderate · Unhealthful for: Sensitive people · All · Not Available

South Coast Air Quality Management District forecasts air quality



Surf and sea

POINT CONCEPTION TO MEXICO

Inner waters: Winds northwest at 10-15 knots, becoming 25-35 knots in the afternoon. Combined seas 8-11 feet, building to 10-13 feet in the afternoon.

Surf zone: A high risk of dangerous rip currents at L.A., Ventura, Orange and S.D. county beaches and moderate at S.B. County beaches.

County	Height	Period	Direction	Temp
Santa Barbara	2-4'	7 sec	W	54
Ventura	4-8'	7 sec	W	54
Los Angeles	4-8'	8 sec	W	57
Orange	5-8'	7 sec	W	57
San Diego	5-8'	7 sec	W	58

Tides

L.A. Outer Harbor, in feet.

Today	8:27a	4.9 Hi	2:33a	1.2 Lo
	9:12p	4.6 Hi	2:55p	0.0 Lo
Tue.	9:01a	4.9 Hi	3:03a	0.8 Lo
	9:30p	4.9 Hi	3:16p	0.1 Lo

UV index

Minutes to burn for sensitive people

Las Vegas, 45 · Phoenix, 25
Los Angeles, 25 · San Francisco, 30

Sun and moon

Today's rise/set

	Los Angeles Co.	Orange Co.	Ventura Co.
Sun	6:38a/7:15p	6:37a/7:14p	6:42a/7:19p
Moon	5:10p/5:39a	5:08p/5:37a	5:14p/5:43a

April 5 · April 13 · April 19 · April 27

Almanac

Sunday Downtown readings

Temperature	Los Angeles	Fullerton	Ventura
High/low	68/52	70/53	61/48
Normal high/low	71/54	73/53	67/47
High/low a year ago	65/54	67/55	64/52
Record high/date	96/1985	81/2016	90/1960
Record low/date	39/1906	40/1999	36/1967

Precipitation	Los Angeles	Fullerton	Ventura
24-hour total (as of 5 p.m.)	0.00	0.00	0.00
Season total (since Oct. 1)	27.42	20.53	25.42
Last season (Oct. 1 to date)	11.83	6.30	11.04
Season norm (Oct. 1 to date)	13.09	10.77	14.78
Humidity (high/low)	85/41	80/43	96/74

California cities

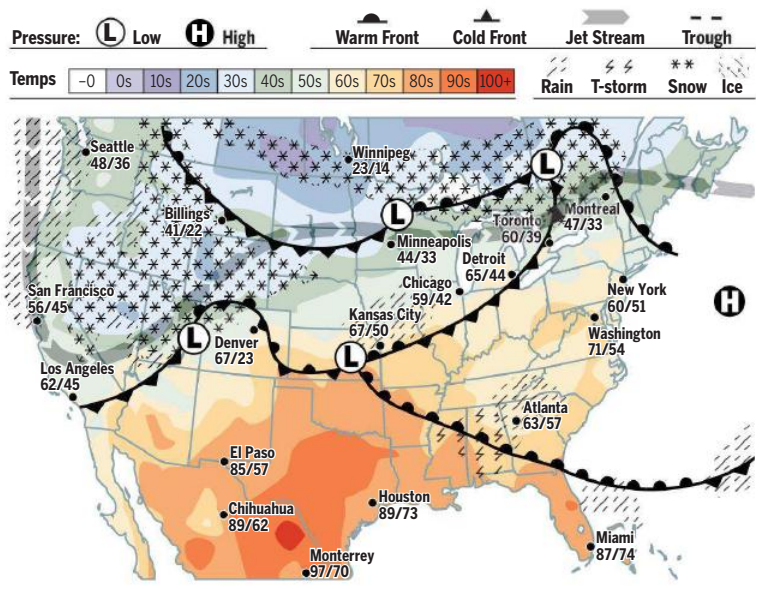
City	Sunday Hi	Lo	Prcp.	Today Hi	Lo	Tuesday Hi	Lo
Anaheim	71	47	--	64	43	64	43
Avalon/Catalina	58	47	--	52	43	52	42
Bakersfield	59	47	--	58	38	57	40
Barstow	79	50	--	56	35	60	37
Big Bear Lake	56	27	--	36	17	39	22
Bishop	73	29	--	45	23	52	27
Burbank	66	46	--	58	44	61	44
Camarillo	63	43	--	62	40	64	42
Chatsworth	73	43	--	58	41	60	43
Chino	70	41	--	60	37	62	40
Compton	66	50	--	64	47	63	44
Dana Point	60	46	--	61	44	60	46
Death Valley	87	60	--	71	54	68	55
Del Mar	61	49	--	57	45	57	46
Escondido	72	44	--	58	32	61	35
Eureka	51	42	.13	50	34	51	40
Fallbrook	66	44	--	60	32	61	37
Fresno	61	47	--	58	37	59	39
Fullerton	70	53	--	67	46	68	45
Hemet	67	38	--	57	30	58	33
Hesperia	72	37	--	50	31	56	30
Huntington Beach	65	50	--	63	48	62	46
Idyllwild	62	39	--	42	26	46	30
Irvine	66	47	--	64	44	64	43

City	Sunday Hi	Lo	Prcp.	Today Hi	Lo	Tuesday Hi	Lo
L.A. D'ntown/USC	68	52	--	62	45	64	44
L.A. Int'l. Airport	62	49	--	62	47	60	46
Laguna Beach	65	45	--	60	45	59	46
Lancaster	71	49	--	49	33	52	32
Long Beach	68	53	--	66	47	66	46
Mammoth Lakes	50	26	--	28	9	32	15
Mission Viejo	67	41	--	60	41	61	41
Monrovia	69	42	--	62	41	63	42
Monterey	56	49	.04	53	41	57	46
Mt. Wilson	54	41	--	37	23	35	34
Needles	84	49	--	70	43	66	43
Newport Beach	62	51	--	63	48	62	47
Northridge	70	43	--	60	41	62	44
Oakland	58	49	.06	56	41	56	40
Oceanside	62	45	--	62	37	61	40
Ojai	66	39	--	57	35	60	35
Ontario	69	45	--	58	38	61	40
Palm Springs	85	54	--	67	44	69	48
Pasadena	72	46	--	60	42	64	44
Paso Robles	64	39	--	57	33	59	34
Redding	61	41	--	57	34	58	35
Riverside	69	36	--	57	31	59	33
Sacramento	61	49	--	60	35	59	38
San Bernardino	70	42	--	58	38	61	40

City	Sunday Hi	Lo	Prcp.	Today Hi	Lo	Tuesday Hi	Lo
San Diego	63	50	--	62	46	62	47
San Francisco	58	50	Tr	56	45	56	45
San Gabriel	xx	xx	--	63	43	66	45
San Jose	59	49	.02	58	38	58	41
San Luis Obispo	62	44	--	58	38	61	40
Santa Ana	63	50	--	64	46	64	47
Santa Barbara	68	46	--	65	41	63	42
Santa Clarita	69	42	--	57	39	59	41
Santa Monica Pier	60	48	--	61	45	60	45
Santa Paula	67	39	--	62	36	62	38
Santa Rosa	62	41	Tr	60	35	61	34
Simi Valley	xx	xx	--	59	39	60	40
Tahoe Valley	40	32	--	26	9	33	16
Temecula	68	41	--	59	31	61	35
Thousand Oaks	63	46	--	61	38	60	40
Torrance	68	50	--	63	48	62	48
UCLA	xx	xx	--	61	45	60	45
Van Nuys	69	46	--	61	44	62	46
Ventura	61	48	--	60	42	59	42
Whittier Hills	71	50	--	64	44	65	45
Woodland Hills	72	41	--	61	41	62	45
Wrightwood	59	40	--	38	26	43	29
Yorba Linda	70	45	--	61	38	61	40
Yosemite Valley	xx	xx	xx	36	17	42	22

Today in North America

More severe storms for the Midwest: A powerful storm system will bring another round of severe thunderstorms to the Midwest and mid-South with all hazards expected. Snow and blizzard conditions will occur in the northern Plains as well.



U.S. cities

SUNDAY'S EXTREMES FOR THE 48 CONTIGUOUS STATES

High 97 in Cotulla, Texas

Low –1 in Stonington, Mich.

City	Sunday Hi	Lo	Prcp.	Today Hi	Lo	Sky
Albany	46	32	Tr	63	44	Pc
Albuquerque	73	37	--	75	39	W
Anchorage	40	27	--	36	35	Pc
Aspen	50	27	--	48	20	R
Atlanta	72	48	--	63	57	Sh
Austin	84	54	--	92	71	Cy
Baltimore	57	45	Tr	70	50	Su
Boise	51	35	.02	44	29	Cy
Boston	47	41	--	54	47	Pc
Buffalo	41	25	Tr	57	43	Cy
Burlington, Vt.	37	25	Tr	53	38	W
Charleston, S.C.	77	57	--	75	62	Pc
Charlotte	69	45	--	67	55	R
Chicago	56	30	--	59	42	Sh
Cincinnati	54	37	.03	70	51	Sh
Cleveland	45	31	.01	63	48	Sh
Columbia, S.C.	74	54	--	70	57	Sh
Columbus	46	36	Tr	65	49	Sh
Dallas/Ft.Worth	80	55	.46	93	70	Pc
Denver	70	32	--	67	23	Su
Detroit	44	28	--	65	44	Cy
El Paso	82	58	--	85	57	W
Eugene	48	39	.52	50	34	Sh
Fort Myers	89	72	--	89	69	Su
Hartford	49	39	.01	58	45	W
Honolulu	80	74	.02	82	71	Cy
Houston	83	63	--	89	73	Pc
Indianapolis	58	34	--	68	52	Pc
Jacksonville, Fla.	85	63	--	85	62	Cy
Kansas City	77	39	Tr	67	50	R
Knoxville	66	37	--	63	52	Sh
Las Vegas	77	51	--	60	40	W
Louisville	63	40	--	73	56	Pc
Medford	50	40	.01	47	29	Sh
Memphis	75	44	--	75	67	Cy
Miami	90	72	--	87	74	Pc
Milwaukee	48	25	--	59	40	Cy
Minneapolis	51	25	--	44	33	Cy
Nashville	69	39	--	66	59	Pc
New Orleans	82	62	--	87	73	Ts
New York	51	40	.03	60	51	Su
Norfolk	57	49	Tr	69	57	Su
Oklahoma City	79	44	.01	84	63	Su
Omaha	73	41	--	58	42	Cy
Orlando	90	72	--	90	65	Cy
Philadelphia	52	42	--	65	48	Pc
Phoenix	82	54	--	82	48	W
Pittsburgh	50	31	.01	64	49	Pc
Portland, Ore.	46	41	.22	50	36	Sh
Providence	51	42	--	53	44	Pc
Raleigh/Durham	70	45	--	70	55	Pc
Reno	57	43	--	37	23	W
Richmond	64	44	.16	73	52	Su
St. Louis	73	37	--	79	64	Pc
Salt Lake City	49	40	Tr	40	29	R

City	Sunday Hi	Lo	Prcp.	Today Hi	Lo	Sky
Seattle	46	36	.17	48	36	Sh
Tampa	85	74	--	87	70	Pc
Tucson	82	46	--	83	41	W
Tulsa	81	44	--	85	70	Su
Washington, D.C.	58	47	--	71	54	Su
Wichita	83	45	--	81	54	Su

World

City	Sunday Hi	Lo	Prcp.	Today Hi	Lo	Sky
Acapulco	87	71	--	88	70	Pc
Amsterdam	48	39	--	50	31	Su
Athens	65	59	.14	66	54	Ts
Bangkok	94	81	.02	100	82	Su
Barcelona	66	48	--	63	48	Su
Berlin	47	37	--	42	28	Pc
Cabo San Lucas	90	68	--	86	65	Hz
Cairo	81	59	--	88	66	Su
Dubai	77	73	--	77	67	Su
Dublin	52	43	.62	52	37	Cy
Havana	88	66	--	90	68	Pc
Ho Chi Minh City	97	77	.01	94	79	Ts
Hong Kong	77	72	.04	77	71	Ts
Istanbul	63	55	.23	64	52	R
Jerusalem	66	45	--	77	54	Su
Johannesburg	72	54	--	69	56	Ts
Kuala Lumpur	91	76	.31	87	75	Ts
Lima	85	73	.01	83	73	Su
London	52	44	--	55	33	Su
Madrid	64	43	--	68	41	Su
Mecca	94	71	--	96	69	Pc
Mexico City	84	55	--	87	57	Pc
Montreal	32	19	--	47	33	Cy
Moscow	50	42	.35	54	41	Cy
Mumbai	88	74	--	88	77	Hz
New Delhi	84	63	--	89	67	Hz
Paris	49	46	.06	55	34	Su
Prague	41	38	.16	39	26	Pc
Rome	65	45	.28	67	40	Cy
Seoul	75	40	--	80	54	Pc
Singapore	88	75	.26	86	76	R
Taipei City	77	64	--	81	66	Su
Tokyo	61	53	.01	62	49	W
Vancouver	46	36	.24	47	35	Sn
Vienna	52	50	.31	45	29	W

Key: **Su** sunny; **Pc** partly cloudy; **Cy** cloudy; **Fg** foggy; **Prcp** precipitation; **Dr** drizzle; **Hz** hazy **Sh** showers; **Ts** thunderstorms; **R** rain; **Sn** snow; **Sf** snow flurries; **I** ice; **Rs** rain/snow; **W** windy; **Tr** trace. **Notes:** National extremes exclude Alaska and Hawaii. Missing data indicated by "xx". Sunday's readings as of 5 p.m.

Forecasts by AccuWeather, Inc. ©2023
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Hotels seek to inject fun, refinement in downtown L.A.

[**Hotels,** from B1]

pletion of Staples Center (now Crypto.com Arena) and followed in 2007 by the L.A. Live hotel, office and entertainment center, which anchored a wave of investment.

"The L.A. Live complex transformed the urban core of the city," said Capuano, who had a key role in putting Marriott hotels there. "Downtown used to be pretty sleepy after about 5 p.m."

Part of a long block that last held a parking lot and a Hooters restaurant is now home to the new skyscraper run by Marriott. Next door is the high-rise luxury apartment complex Circa.

Among Marriott's newest brands is Moxy, which is cheeky like its name and intended to appeal to younger guests seeking a good time and a lower price point. Rooms are small by American standards.

AC has a Spanish heritage and is pitched to older guests who prefer a more refined European sensibility.

Moxy hotels are meant to be "irreverent and fun," said real estate developer Mitchell Hochberg, president of Lightstone Group. His company built the L.A. complex as well as Moxy hotels in New York and Miami Beach.

"A lot of hotels are too precious," said Hochberg, who was sitting back in a soft chair in the Moxy L.A. lobby with his boots on the table in front of him. "And too much alike."

The lobby, where guests can check in at the bar, is intended to have a casual, living-room atmosphere. The theme and color palette is "desert nomad," with macrame art, a rammed-earth wall and a motorcycle with a sidecar to bring the point home. A vintage pinball machine is tucked in an upstairs balcony.

There are scattered wooden workstations where guests or visitors can plop down and be — or at least act — productive. Hochberg hopes local residents will be among the people hanging out.

"We want neighbors too," he said, so "guests can experience the city they are in" and not just meet fellow travelers. About half the people hanging out or working in the lobby of a Moxy in New York are not staying there, he said.

ROBERT GAUTHIER Los Angeles Times

SET TO OPEN this month, Moxy hotel intends to appeal to younger guests, while AC hotel targets older guests who prefer a more refined European sensibility.

The attention-grabbing attraction for travelers and locals alike will be Level 8, a spread of eating and drinking venues that cover the entire eighth floor of both hotels; the Moxy and AC are stacked vertically side by side in a 37-story tower designed by architecture firm Gensler. The exterior is clad in a 15,000-square-foot electronic billboard, one of the largest in the West capable of projecting a 3-D effect.

With Level 8, the prolific L.A. bar and restaurant operators Mark and Jonnie Houston, known for creating playful and theatrical settings to eat and drink, are trying to notch a new high in zaniness and rakish decadence.

Among their earlier attention-grabbers are Good Times at Davey Wayne's, a 1970s-themed speakeasy in Hollywood that's entered through a refrigerator, and Kiss Kiss Bang Bang, a Koreatown nightclub that combines Art Deco with disco. Their Parisian cocktail lounge Pour Vous had burlesque dancers.

"We have never tackled anything of this magnitude," Jonnie Houston said of Level 8, which will span 30,000 square feet and have eight distinct venues, including restaurants, cocktail bars, a pool deck and a nightclub.

Japanese-inspired restaurant Lucky Mizu will be centered under an "earth harp," a giant musical instrument with strings that stretch over the audience. Guests will cook traditional hot pot cuisine and steamed seiro mushi entrees at their tables. Another will serve Japanese teppanyaki, where chefs cook flamboyantly on huge griddles. Masked Mexican-style wrestlers will perform in a ring at Sinners y Santos.

A speakeasy bar will be entered through what appears to be an old cathedral. The pool deck is expected to have a Miami flavor capped with an outdoor bar under a rotating carousel.

Mark Houston said he got goose bumps looking up at the "massive" spinning carousel on the corner of Figueroa and Pico.

> 'Your hotel has to be Instagrammable. People pick a place to honeymoon or have a vacation or staycation because it's Instagrammable.'
>
> — DONALD WISE, hotel investment banker at Turnbull Capital Group

"It made me feel like how Walt Disney probably felt seeing Disneyland being built," he said.

It's been a hard slog, though, to meet all the safety, health and design requirements of building complicated bars and restaurants far above the street.

"I realized why high-rises are so cookie cutter," Mark Houston said. "It's because you deal with so many hurdles that everyone just gives up."

It will take longer to complete Level 8 than the Moxy and AC, which are set to open April 12. The Houstons' complex should be open by the end of June.

If the result is as hoped, the Houstons will oversee an attraction that will inspire return visits because, Mark Houston said, "You can't do it all in one night."

Ideally for the Houstons and hoteliers, Southern California residents might even decide to turn downtown visits into staycations that last a couple of nights because they are entertained, he said.

Moxy's good-time vibe may help it stand out from the competition, said Donald Wise, a hotel investment banker at Turnbull Capital Group who is not involved in the project.

"It's all about differentiation," he said. "You're trying to differentiate your box from the box down the street."

Design flourishes such as the motorcycle in the lobby and the Houstons' sky-high adult playground should tee up tempting backgrounds for people to tout their visits on social media, Wise said.

For many, "Your hotel has to be Instagrammable," he said. "People pick a place to honeymoon or have a vacation or staycation because it's Instagrammable."

The hotel business has seen a substantial recovery since the depths of the pandemic in 2020, industry consultant Alan Reay of Atlas Hospitality said. Leading the way have been travelers eager to kick back at airy resorts.

Coastal inns and hotels in leisure destinations such as the Coachella Valley "are enjoying record revenues post-COVID," he said.

Hotels in California urban centers such as San Francisco, San Jose and downtown Los Angeles have also recovered but are still lagging behind their 2019 peaks, Reay said. Such markets are more reliant on business travelers and conventioneers, who have yet to return in full force.

Conventions are coming back "slowly but surely," but the pipeline of events that was shut off during the pandemic has yet to fully refill, he said. "You don't just flip a switch and put a convention on."

Conventions and group business events will continue to grow, Reay predicted, as people seek opportunities for face-to-face meetings that have grown less easy to arrange as offices empty in favor of remote work.

Average hotel occupancy in downtown L.A. last year was 71%, a solid rise from 60% in 2021, Reay said. The average price of renting a room went from $210 per night to $265. Rooms at the Moxy will start at $199, and a night at the AC will begin at $219.

But even though room rates have bounced back to pre-pandemic levels, hoteliers are facing inflation and higher costs than they had before, especially for labor, Reay said.

Los Angeles is experiencing the eighth-slowest recovery of all major markets in the United States in terms of gross operating profit per available room, according to a report by the American Hotel & Lodging Assn. The trade group predicted the region will continue a slow recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic while the hospitality industry's performance nationwide surpasses 2019 levels.

"Overall, the hotel business is very robust right now," Wise said.

Marriott, Capuano said, is "cautiously bullish" on downtown Los Angeles.

"There are some challenges that need to be overcome around homelessness and crime," he said. "We want to be part of those solutions" in part by working with the mayor's office, the Los Angeles Tourism and Convention Board and other civic leaders.

Capuano lived in Southern California for 15 years, he said, "so I've got a vested interest in seeing the city continue to grow and thrive."

SPORTS

MONDAY, APRIL 3, 2023 :: LATIMES.COM/SPORTS

MICHAEL WYKE Associated Press

LeBRON JAMES had 18 points, 10 rebounds and 11 assists in less than 30 minutes and likes what he sees lately. "We just want to put ourselves in position to be able to compete for a championship," he said.

Maestro James directs Lakers' symphonic win

'Effortless' triple-double, Davis' 40 music to their ears

LAKERS 134, HOUSTON 109

BY DAN WOIKE

HOUSTON — When Stephan Silas and the Rockets last saw LeBron James, it was in mid-January in Los Angeles. The Lakers were on shaky ground, five games below .500, and in real trouble.

But that night against Houston, James put the Lakers on his back, scoring 48 points in his most dominant offensive game of the season.

On Sunday, when the Rockets saw James again, it couldn't have been more different.

They saw him crash the glass. They saw him throw perfect lead passes to Austin Reaves. They saw him respond to a missed transition layup with a thunderous dunk on his next touch.

It was just as Silas feared before the game: This was the Lakers as their best version.

James was able to play his best role — a little of all of them — as he orchestrated a dominant 134-109 win for the Lakers.

The luxury to let James approach the game with surgical precision came from Anthony Davis, who again dominated and continued to make good on his word to "get back" at teams that had taken wins from the Lakers.

Against the Chicago Bulls, he scored 38. Against the Minnesota Timberwolves, he did the same. And Sunday, against a Houston defense without a prayer against him, Davis dropped 40 points, needing only 20 shots and just more than 30 minutes to dominate.

"When AD comes out and does what AD did tonight and these last three games ... he's been phenomenal," Reaves said. "And if he continues to do this, we'll be a problem."

The Lakers have won three straight games and 10 of their last 14 as they have climbed from 11th to the seventh spot in the Western Conference with one week left in the regular season.

D'Angelo Russell did not play in the second half because of a sore left foot, but the [See **Lakers,** D6]

A superb start for Syndergaard gets squandered

Veteran right-hander displays command in his Dodgers debut, but offense struggles.

ARIZONA 2
DODGERS 1

BY MIKE DIGIOVANNA

It took four spring training starts for Noah Syndergaard to come to grips with the fact that, despite his December proclamation that there is "no excuse as to why I can't get back to 100 mph," his once-vaunted fastball is not going to approach triple digits like it did before 2020 elbow surgery.

"If I don't throw 100 [mph] again," the new Dodgers pitcher said on the eve of the regular season, "that's fine."

And that's perfectly fine with the Dodgers, who weren't expecting the second coming of Sandy Alcantara when they signed Syndergaard to a one-year, $13-million contract.

They will gladly take Sunday's version of Syndergaard. The right-hander displayed superb command of a four-pitch mix and held the Arizona Diamondbacks to one run and four hits in six innings, striking out six and walking none, in a 2-1 loss before a crowd of 46,549 in Dodger Stadium.

"I thought he was really good early, that life, the teeth, to all of his pitches, the swing-and-miss," Dodgers [See **Dodgers,** D5]

JED JACOBSOHN Associated Press

SHOHEI OHTANI rounds the bases after he hit a fifth-inning home run in the Angels' shutout win.

A hellish stretch will test Angels

ANGELS 6
OAKLAND 0

DYLAN HERNÁNDEZ

OAKLAND — For the Angels, this was a season-opening series from which few conclusions could be drawn. Their opponents were that awful.

The Oakland Athletics are a major league team in name only, their talent level a reflection of how little money cheapskate owner John Fisher invests in his product.

With Mike Trout and Shohei Ohtani homering in consecutive at-bats, the Angels claimed a 6-0 victory over this collection of cannon fodder Sunday, giving them their second win in the three-game series at RingCentral Coliseum.

The Angels might not have said it aloud, but they departed for their next series in Seattle knowing they at least won't finish last in their division. As for what kind of team they actually are, the answer will come soon.

They take on the Mariners for three games, after which they will host the Toronto Blue Jays and Washington Nationals. The series against the Nationals will be followed by a day off, which will lead into a seven- [See **Hernández,** D5]

NCAA BASKETBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS

WOMEN: NO. 3 LOUISIANA STATE DOWNS NO. 2 IOWA FOR ITS FIRST TITLE
MEN: NO. 5 SAN DIEGO STATE VS. NO. 4 CONNECTICUT | TONIGHT AT HOUSTON, 6:15, CHANNEL 2

Tigers hit high point for first national title

LOUISIANA STATE 102, IOWA 85

BY DOUG FEINBERG

DALLAS — Kim Mulkey had tears of joy streaming down her face as she guided Louisiana State to the national championship.

Her Tigers used a record offensive performance to beat Caitlin Clark and Iowa 102-85 on Sunday and win the first basketball title in school history.

The victory made Mulkey the first women's coach to win national championships at two schools. She won three at Baylor before leaving for LSU two years ago.

"Coaches coach a lifetime, and this is the fourth time I've been blessed," Mulkey said. "Never in the history of LSU basketball, men or women, has [anybody] ever played for a championship."

The 102 points broke the previous high for a championship game, surpassing the 97 that Texas scored against USC in 1986.

Mulkey now has the third-most titles of all time behind Geno Auriemma's 11 and Pat Summitt's eight. Mulkey has never lost in a championship [See **NCAA women,** D2]

DARRON CUMMINGS Associated Press

LSU PLAYERS rejoice after they captured the school's first basketball national championship. "My tears are tears of joy," Tigers coach Kim Mulkey said.

Aztecs relish underdog label one more time

BY MARK ZEIGLER

HOUSTON — Oddsmakers generally defer to predictive computer metrics to set betting lines for college basketball games. The respected Kenpom.com metric, which rates Connecticut as the nation's No. 1 team, forecasts that the Huskies will beat San Diego State in the NCAA championship game Monday night at 72,000-seat NRG Stadium by five points, 69-64.

The opening line: Connecticut minus-six.

Within minutes, so much money had been wagered on the Huskies that it moved to 6½ points. And then seven. And now 7½.

If it gets to eight, and it's certainly trending that way, the Aztecs would be the biggest underdogs in an NCAA final since 1999.

The eye test is hardly a deterrent. The Huskies have rolled through the tournament with victories by 24, 15, 23, 28 and 13 points. The 23 was against an Arkansas team that had just knocked off No. 1 seed and defending national champion Kansas. As reporters entered the Aztecs' locker room interview session Sunday afternoon, one of the assistant coaches [See **NCAA,** D2]

PRO CALENDAR

	MON 3	TUE 4	WED 5	THU 6	FRI 7
DODGERS	COLORADO 7 SNLA	COLORADO 7 SNLA		at Arizona 7 SNLA	at Arizona 6:30 SNLA
ANGELS	at Seattle 6:30 BSW	at Seattle 6:30 BSW	at Seattle 1 BSW		TORONTO 6:30 BSW
LAKERS		at Utah 6 SpecSN	at Clippers 7 SpecSN, ESPN		PHOENIX 7:30 SpecSN
CLIPPERS			LAKERS 7 BSSC, ESPN		
KINGS		EDMONTON 7:30 ESPN		at Vegas 7 BSW	
DUCKS			EDMONTON 7 TNT		
GALAXY	SATURDAY AT HOUSTON, 5:30 P.M., APPLE TV				
LAFC			at Vancouver ** 7		
ANGEL CITY	APRIL 15 VS. LOUISVILLE, 7 P.M., CBSSN				

Shade denotes home game. **CONCACAF Champions League

TODAY ON THE AIR

TIME	EVENT	ON THE AIR
BASEBALL		
11 a.m.	New York Mets at Milwaukee	**TV:** MLB
4 p.m.	Philadelphia at New York Yankees	**TV:** MLB
6:30 p.m.	Angels at Seattle	**TV:** BSW **R:** 830, 1330
7 p.m.	Colorado at Dodgers	**TV:** SNLA **R:** 570, 1020
COLLEGE BASKETBALL		
6:15 p.m.	NCAA title game, Connecticut vs. San Diego State	**TV:** 2
COLLEGE SOFTBALL		
4 p.m.	Kentucky at Georgia	**TV:** SEC
HOCKEY		
5 p.m.	Vegas at Minnesota	**TV:** NHL
SOCCER		
Noon	England, Tottenham Hotspur at Everton	**TV:** USA
Noon	Spain, Rayo Vallecano at Valencia	**TV:** ESPND
2:15 p.m.	South American U-17 Championship, Uruguay vs. Chile	**TV:** FS2
4:45 p.m.	South American U-17 Championship, Colombia vs. Brazil	**TV:** FS2
8 p.m.	Mexico, women, Santos Laguna at Tijuana	**TV:** ESPND
TENNIS		
7 a.m.	WTA, Charleston (S.C.) Open, early rounds	**TV:** Tennis
3 p.m.	WTA Charleston (S.C.) Open, early rounds	**TV:** Tennis

Tigers set mark to claim the title

[**NCAA women,** from D1]
game.

"My tears are tears of joy," she said. "I'm so happy for everybody back home in Louisiana."

Clark, the Associated Press national player of the year, couldn't lead the Hawkeyes to their first national title despite one of the greatest individual performances in NCAA tournament history. The junior finished with 30 points. She scored 40 in the semifinals to knock out unbeaten South Carolina one game after she had the first 40-point triple-double in NCAA history in the Elite Eight.

The dazzling guard, who grew up in Iowa, set the NCAA record for points in a tournament, passing the 177 that Sheryl Swoopes scored in 1993 en route to leading Texas Tech to the title that year. Clark ended her tournament with 191.

Taking in the game was First Lady Jill Biden, who sat in a suite with tennis great Billie Jean King.

Jasmine Carson scored 22 points, Alexis Morris contributed 21 and Angel Reese had 15 points and 10 rebounds for third-seeded LSU (34-2).

"It's no one-man show around here. When I go down, the next man is up," said Reese, who was honored as the most outstanding player of the Final Four. "Every single time, every time I go out or Alexis goes out, everybody always comes to step up."

Trailing by 21 points early in the third quarter, Iowa started hitting from the outside to go on a 15-2 run, hitting four three-pointers and converting a three-point play to get to within 65-57.

The No.2 seed Hawkeyes (31-7) trailed 73-64 with 1:03 left in the third quarter when Clark was called for a technical foul. She swatted the ball away on the floor after a foul call against a teammate. That counted as a personal foul for her, her fourth of the game.

"I thought they called it very, very tight," Clark said. "Hit with a technical foul for throwing the ball under the basket — sometimes that's how things go."

Clark played the entire fourth quarter with four fouls but couldn't get the Hawkeyes much closer.

"They really played well, they were ready to go. They did a great job. I'm just so proud of my team," Iowa coach Lisa Bluder said. "This is brutal. It's really tough to walk out of that locker room today and not be able to coach Monika [Czinano] and McKenna [Warnock] again. I'm very thankful for the season we had and don't want to take anything away from that."

After Kateri Poole hit a three-pointer in front of the LSU bench, Mulkey started weeping. A few seconds later after another Tigers basket, Reese taunted Clark by putting her hand in front of her face with a "you can't see me" gesture and then pointed to her ring finger at the end.

"All year, I was critiqued about who I was," Reese said. "I don't fit in a box that y'all want me to be in. I'm too hood. I'm too ghetto. But when other people do it, y'all say nothing. So this was for the girls that look like me, that's going to speak up on what they believe in. It's unapologetically you."

As the final seconds ticked off, Mulkey and Reese hugged, setting off a wild celebration by the Tigers.

The game was tight for the first 15 minutes before Carson got hot from the outside. She made all six of her shots in the second quarter, including four three-pointers.

After one of them, she threw her hands in the air and Mulkey mimicked it on the sidelines.

For good measure, the graduate student guard banked in a shot just before the halftime buzzer to give the Tigers a 59-42 lead. It was the most points in the first half of a championship game, breaking the record held by Tennessee since 1998.

"I've been working for this my whole life," Carson said at halftime. "It feels great to finally display it on this stage."

LSU shot 58% from the field in the opening 20 minutes, including going nine for 12 from behind the three-point arc. The Tigers finished the game shooting 54% from the field, including making 11 of 17 from beyond the arc.

Clark had 16 points and five assists before picking up her third foul with 3:56 to go in the half, which didn't go over well with the sellout crowd of more than 19,000 fans.

Before Sunday, Carson had gone scoreless in five of her seven postseason games in her career. She had 11 points in this NCAA tournament before the finale.

Feinberg writes for the Associated Press.

TONY GUTIERREZ Associated Press

IOWA'S Kate Martin and LSU's Angel Reese, who was named the most outstanding player of the Final Four, battle for a loose ball during the Tigers' 102-85 win.

LOUISIANA STATE 102, IOWA 85

LOUISIANA ST.—Reese 5-12 5-8 15, Williams 9-16 2-2 20, Johnson 4-11 1-1 10, Morris 8-14 4-4 21, Poole 2-3 0-2 6, Carson 7-8 3-4 22, Poa 2-3 0-0 6, Smith 1-3 0-0 2, Totals 38-70 15-21 102

IOWA—Warnock 3-7 2-4 9, Czinano 5-11 3-3 13, Clark 9-22 4-5 30, Marshall 3-5 4-4 12, Martin 5-7 0-0 13, Stuelke 1-2 0-0 2, Davis 1-1 0-0 2, Affolter 0-0 0-0 0, O'Grady 1-1 2-4 4, Totals 28-56 15-20 85

Louisiana St.	27	32	16	27—102
Iowa	22	20	22	21—85

Three-point goals—Louisiana St. 11-17 (Johnson 1-4, Morris 1-3, Poole 2-2, Carson 5-6, Poa 2-2), Iowa 14-30 (Warnock 1-4, Clark 8-19, Marshall 2-3, Martin 3-4). Assists—Louisiana St. 22 (Morris 9), Iowa 20 (Clark 8). Fouled out—Iowa Czinano, Warnock. Rebounds—Louisiana St. 37 (Reese 10), Iowa 26 (Czinano 6, Warnock 6). Total fouls—Louisiana St. 18, Iowa 19. Technical fouls—Iowa Clark 1. A—19,482.

Underdog label suits the Aztecs just fine

[**NCAA,** from D1]
was sitting in the hallway watching film of Connecticut's Elite Eight game against Gonzaga. The video was paused in the second half. The score: 77-45.

Miami, which has two NBA prospects and knocked off No. 2 seed Texas in the Elite Eight, was down 20 in Saturday's other semifinal.

The Aztecs? They had 11 turnovers in the first half and needed clutch jumpers from Matt Bradley and Micah Parrish to hold off Charleston in the opening game. Came from nine down inside 12 minutes to go to beat Alabama. Got a controversial whistle and free throws with 1.2 seconds left to beat Creighton. Trailed by 14 in the second half against Florida Atlantic and won on a buzzer-beater from Lamont Butler.

Connecticut: three and possibly four projected NBA draft picks in Adama Sanogo, Jordan Hawkins, Andre Jackson Jr. and 7-foot-2 freshman center Donovan Clingan.

San Diego State: none currently.

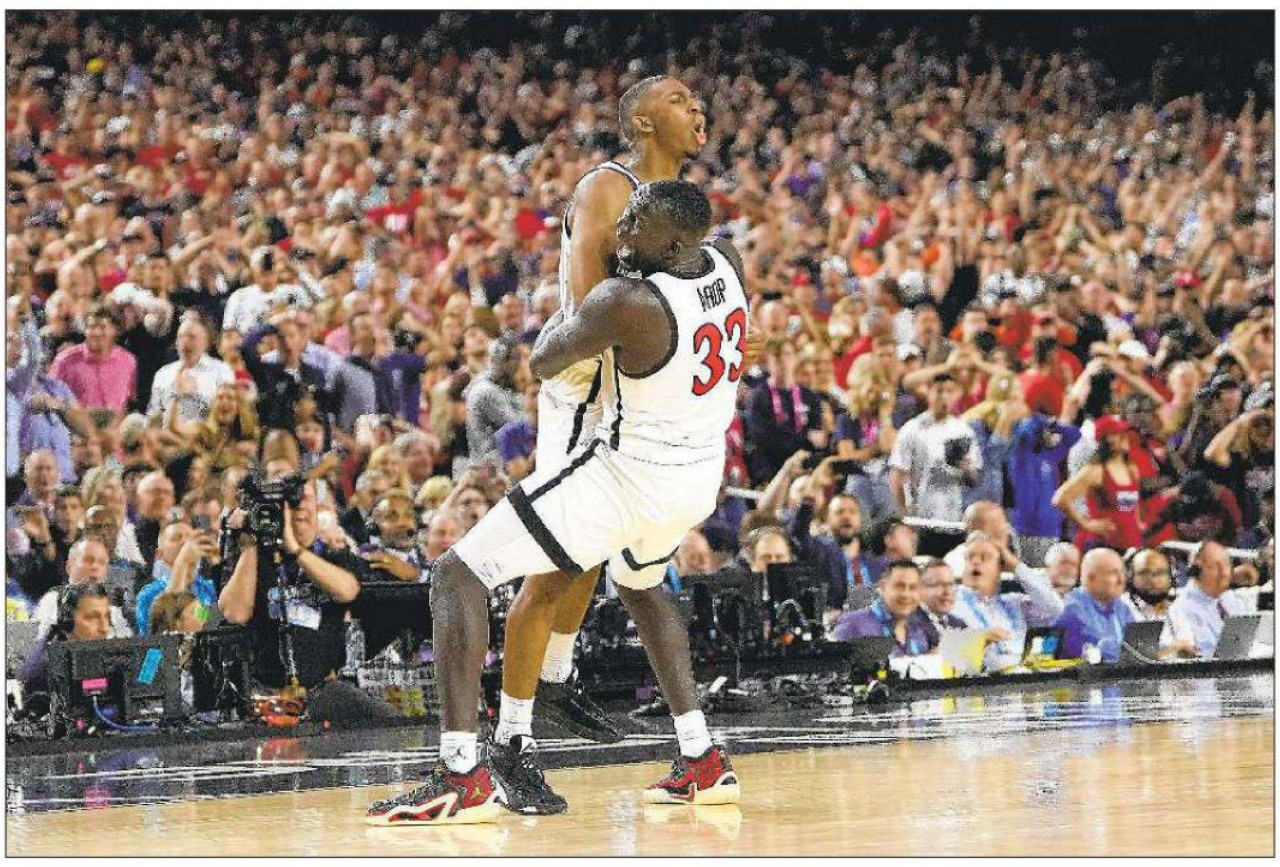
Connecticut: $24-million annual men's basketball budget, charters, NIL, high-profile recruits, the works.

San Diego State: $7.2-million budget, commercial, minimal NIL, under-the-radar recruits, humility, work ethic.

Connecticut: four national titles and the most by any program since 1999.

San Diego State: zero NCAA tournament victories before 2011, zero against better seeds until this tournament.

The one caveat, the one qualifier, the one *yeah, but* ...



DAVID J. PHILLIP Associated Press

SAN DIEGO STATE'S Lamont Butler, left, gets a big hug from teammate Aguek Arop after hitting the winning basket Saturday. The fifth-seeded Aztecs' run has made them the darlings of the NCAA tournament.

Doubt these Aztecs at your own peril.

They're old, they're deep, they're resilient, they're persistent, they're confident. They look positively pedestrian for 30 or 35 minutes, but then you look at the scoreboard and they're still hanging around and ... wait ... did they just take the lead?

On Saturday, they got roasted on defense in the first half and were four for 12 from the free-throw line over the final seven minutes.

And won. It was the first buzzer-beater in Final Four history by a team trailing, not tied.

"Whether we're making or missing shots, we're going to stick to our game plan of what we've been doing all March," Bradley said. "We haven't shot the ball pretty, but we've been good at winning games."

That, then, might be their best chance. Muck up the game. Hang around. Give the Huskies a false sense of security. Watch the pressure of expectation increase exponentially on the prohibitive favorites as a tight game lurches into the closing minutes. It worked against Alabama, which took a nine-point lead inside 12 minutes to go, figured it was over and crumbled.

Could it work against the four-time national champions?

"They haven't had to worry about close games so far [in the tournament]," Aztecs coach Brian Dutcher said. "So I hope we can give them one, and we'll see what they do in a close game. They've been fantastic."

The Huskies look impermeable right now. It hasn't been that way all season, though. A 14-0 start with wins against Alabama, Iowa State and Oregon got them to No. 2 in the Associated Press poll. But then nearly dropped out completely, falling to No. 24 after a stretch of six losses in eight games in January. Since then, they're 14-2 with the only losses by three at Creighton and by two against Marquette in the Big East tournament.

"We're just going to try to ignore that [favorite] tag," coach Dan Hurley said. "I just think it helps us a lot what we went through in January. We know that if we get away from our identity for a tick, we become very vulnerable.

"With the experience and the physicality and the age and just how well-coached the San Diego State team is, and the teams they've beaten to get here, we expect a much different type of game, much more of a fight."

For Dutcher, there are obstacles other than defending the shifty Hawkins and the 6-9, 245-pound Sanogo. They must guard against human nature, the natural let-down following the emotional outpouring when Butler's shot tickled the net and an entire city back home erupted.

In many respects, the Aztecs have already won. They have gone further than any team in school or Mountain West history. They eliminated the No. 1 overall seed.

They have captivated a nation with a pair of dramatic, come-from-behind, last-second wins. They're long past the it's-all-gravy phase, the cherry-on-top phase.

"That's it," Dutcher said. "We have a national perception now. I think everybody out west has always known we've been good. But now that we're playing on the biggest stage, and we're winning on the biggest stage, I think a lot like when Gonzaga made that step, they did it on a national stage. That's how they gained respect.

"Hopefully this national stage will give us national respect. That's what I think it will do."

The point spread keeps creeping up.

Zeigler writes for the San Diego Union-Tribune.

Johnson's goal on final play wins game

ANGEL CITY 2
ORLANDO 1

ASSOCIATED PRESS

ORLANDO, Fla. — Katie Johnson's goal on the last play of the match gave Angel City a 2-1 victory over the Orlando Pride in the only National Women's Soccer League game Sunday.

Claire Emslie converted a penalty kick for Angel City (1-1-0) in the first half at Exploria Stadium after Alyssa Thompson was taken down on a breakaway in the box.

Emslie sent Pride goalkeeper Anna Moorhouse diving in the other direction and slotted her shot to the right corner.

With the score tied 1-1, Emslie got a second chance from the penalty spot in the 89th minute when a handball was called in the box, but Moorhouse came up with a big save.

Johnson's goal was the latest game-winning goal in a regular-season NWSL match.

Rookie Messiah Bright scored in the 51st minute for Orlando, which dropped to 0-2-0.

NWSL standings

	W	L	T	Pts	GF	GA
Portland	2	0	0	6	8	1
San Diego	2	0	0	6	6	3
Washington	1	0	1	4	3	2
Houston	1	0	1	4	2	1
OL Reign	1	1	0	3	2	1
Gotham FC	1	1	0	3	2	3
ANGEL CITY	1	1	0	3	3	3
North Carolina	1	1	0	3	2	3
Louisville	0	0	2	2	2	2
Chicago	0	2	0	0	3	5
Kansas City	0	2	0	0	1	5
Orlando	0	2	0	0	1	6

SUNDAY'S RESULT
ANGEL CITY 2, Orlando 1
FRIDAY'S GAME
Houston at Portland

Iafallo's two goals help Kings clinch playoff berth

Winger also makes key deflection late as L.A. wraps up spot for second consecutive season. Edler injured.

KINGS 4
VANCOUVER 1

WIRE REPORTS

VANCOUVER, Canada — Alex Iafallo scored twice, Joonas Korpisalo made 21 saves, and the Kings wrapped up a playoff spot with a 4-1 victory over the Vancouver Canucks on Sunday night.

Arthur Kaliyev and Blake Lizotte — into an empty net — each had a goal and an assist for the Kings, who are headed to the postseason for the second straight season. Anze Kopitar added a pair of assists.

The Kings improved to 45-22-10, winning for the second straight night after topping Seattle on Saturday.

"That's a hell of an accomplishment for our group," Kings coach Todd McLellan said. "I thought tonight was a tough night for us to play, a lot of heavy games on this trip, and to play back to back, short turnaround, complete team win tonight."

Brock Boeser scored for the Canucks, and Thatcher Demko stopped 21 shots. The Canucks were eliminated from postseason contention earlier in the night when Winnipeg beat New Jersey. Vancouver has missed the playoffs three straight years and seven of eight.

"We pretty much knew a couple of games ago it was unrealistic to make it," center Elias Pettersson said. "But we still play with pride and try to build for next season. So these games are important. We have [five] games left to build."

Iafallo put away his second goal of the night — and 14th of the season — on a power play 3:25 into the second after Jack Studnicka was called for tripping.

Viktor Arvidsson fired a shot off the post, and the rebound fell into traffic in front of the Vancouver net, where Iafallo muscled it in to give the Kings a 2-1 lead.

With Vancouver's Anthony Beauvillier and the Kings' Quinton Byfield in the box, Iafallo ripped a one-timer past Demko from the bottom of the faceoff circle for his first goal of the night.

Iafallo also made a crucial stick deflection of Andrei Kuzmenko's shot in the slot midway through the third period on a Vancouver power play.

"He's the utility guy," Kopitar told NHL.com, referring to Iafallo.

"You can use him in every position possible, minus the goalie. He can play up the lineup, down the lineup, (power play), (penalty kill), he does it all, and it's obviously great to see him getting rewarded."

DARRYL DYCK Associated Press

ARTHUR KALIYEV, right, gets tangled with Ethan Bear in an open-ice puck battle. Kaliyev's score in the third gave the Kings an insurance goal against the Canucks, who were eliminated before the game ended.

KINGS 4, CANUCKS 1

KINGS	1	1	2	4
Vancouver	1	0	0	1

FIRST PERIOD: 1. Van., Boeser 17 (Miller, Di Giuseppe), 5:56. 2. KINGS, Iafallo 13 (Kempe, Kopitar), 13:02. **Penalties**—Moore, KINGS (Hooking), 7:01. Byfield, KINGS (High Sticking), 11:09. Beauvillier, VAN (Tripping), 12:56.

SECOND PERIOD: 3. KINGS, Iafallo 14 (Arvidsson, Kopitar), 3:24 (pp). **Penalty**—Studnicka, VAN (Tripping), 3:13.

THIRD PERIOD: 4. KINGS, Kaliyev 12 (Gavrikov, Lizotte), 13:35. 5. KINGS, Lizotte 11 (Kaliyev), 19:11 (en). **Penalties**—Arvidsson, KINGS (Slashing), 9:52. Danault, KINGS (Tripping), 14:36.

SHOTS ON GOAL: KINGS 5-6-14—25. Van. 13-5-6—24. Power-play conversions—KINGS 1 of 2. Van. 0 of 4.

GOALIES: KINGS, Korpisalo 16-13-4 (24 shots-23 saves). Van., Demko 11-14-4 (24-21). Att—18,725 (18,910). T—2:22.

Fiala sits out and Edler gets hurt

Kings leading scorer Kevin Fiala was scratched with a lower-body injury after he played Saturday. ... Defenseman Alexander Edler left with an upper-body injury late in the first period.

Late goals rally Flames past Ducks

Lucic and Stone score in the third period as Calgary sends Anaheim to its eighth consecutive loss.

CALGARY 5
DUCKS 4

ASSOCIATED PRESS

CALGARY, Canada — Milan Lucic and Michael Stone scored in the third period, and the Calgary Flames rallied to beat the Ducks 5-4 on Sunday.

Nick Ritchie had a goal and an assist, and Andrew Mangiapane and Nikita Zadorov also scored to help Calgary win a season-high fourth straight game. Tyler Toffoli had two assists.

Jacob Markstrom gave up two goals in nine shots in the first period and was replaced by Dan Vladar, who stopped 11 shots over the final two periods for the win.

Calgary remained two points behind Winnipeg for the second wild card in the Western Conference.

Frank Vatrano had two goals and an assist, Max Comtois had a goal and an assist, and Scott Harrington also scored for the Ducks, who have lost eight consecutive games. Defenseman Kevin Shattenkirk had two assists, and goalie Lukas Dostal made 36 saves.

Lucic tied the score 4-4 at 6:26 of the third. After defenseman MacKenzie Weegar blocked a shot in the defensive zone, Blake Coleman fed Lucic to score far side off the rush for his seventh goal of the season.

Stone, playing his first game for the Flames since Feb. 18 because of a lower-back injury, let loose a slap shot from the point that beat Dostal for the go-ahead goal with 2:38 left. It was his sixth of the season.

Vatrano gave the Ducks a 1-0 lead at 4:17 of the first period with a rising shot that beat Markstrom's glove. It marked the 10th time Calgary gave up a goal on an opponent's first shot of the game — the ninth time against Markstrom.

Markstrom stopped Max Jones on a breakaway with eight minutes remaining in the opening period.

Comtois doubled the lead with 2:10 left in the opening period as he converted the rebound of Vatrano's shot.

The Flames scored the next three goals to take the lead.

JEFF MCINTOSH Associated Press

DUCKS GOALIE Lukas Dostal dives in an attempt to control the puck against the Flames. Dostal made 36 saves but gave up two third-period goals to Calgary.

FLAMES 5, DUCKS 4

DUCKS	2	2	0	4
Calgary	0	3	2	5

FIRST PERIOD: 1. DUCKS, Vatrano 19 (Shattenkirk, Zegras), 4:17. 2. DUCKS, Comtois 9 (Shattenkirk, Vatrano), 17:50. **Penalties**—Coleman, CGY (Slashing), 15:50. White, DUCKS (Hooking), 19:06.

SECOND PERIOD: 3. Cal., Mangiapane 16 (Toffoli, Andersson), 0:33 (pp). 4. Cal., Zadorov 10 (Huberdeau, Toffoli), 7:12. 5. Cal., Ritchie 13 (Stecher, Kadri), 8:18. 6. DUCKS, Vatrano 20 (Carrick, Fowler), 9:16. 7. DUCKS, Harrington 4 (Carrick, Comtois), 12:56. **Penalty**—Leason, DUCKS (Tripping), 2:59.

THIRD PERIOD: 8. Cal., Lucic 7 (Weegar, Coleman), 6:26. 9. Cal., Stone 6 (Ritchie), 17:22. **Penalties**—None.

SHOTS ON GOAL: DUCKS 9-9-4—22. Cal. 9-19-13—41. Power-play conversions—DUCKS 0 of 1. Cal. 1 of 2.

GOALIES: DUCKS, Dostal 4-8-2 (41 shots-36 saves). Cal., Markstrom 22-20-10 (9-7), Cal., Vladar 14-6-5 (13-11). Att—0 (19,289). T—2:32.

NHL STANDINGS

Sixteen teams qualify for the Stanley Cup playoffs. The format is a set bracket that is largely division-based with wild cards. The top three teams in each division will make up the first 12 teams in the playoffs. The remaining four spots will be filled by the next two highest-placed finishers in each conference, based on regular-season record and regardless of division.

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Pacific	W	L	OL	Pts	GF	GA
x-Vegas	47	22	7	101	253	217
x-KINGS	45	22	10	100	266	242
x-Edmonton	45	23	9	99	306	255
Seattle	41	26	8	90	259	240
Calgary	36	26	15	87	250	241
Vancouver	34	35	7	75	261	285
San Jose	22	39	15	59	223	291
DUCKS	23	44	10	56	195	317
Central	**W**	**L**	**OL**	**Pts**	**GF**	**GA**
Minnesota	44	23	9	97	229	205
Colorado	45	24	6	96	252	207
Dallas	41	21	14	96	262	212
Winnipeg	43	31	3	89	234	215
Nashville	38	29	8	84	212	220
St. Louis	35	35	7	77	251	286
Arizona	27	37	13	67	215	274
Chicago	24	46	6	54	186	277

Note: Overtime or shootout losses worth one point.

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Metropolitan	W	L	OL	Pts	GF	GA
x-Carolina	49	18	9	107	248	196
x-New Jersey	48	21	8	104	266	216
x-N.Y. Rangers	45	21	11	101	261	207
N.Y. Islanders	39	30	9	87	227	214
Pittsburgh	38	29	10	86	248	249
Washington	34	34	9	77	240	243
Philadelphia	29	34	13	71	207	253
Columbus	24	44	8	56	203	303
Atlantic	**W**	**L**	**OL**	**Pts**	**GF**	**GA**
z-Boston	60	12	5	125	286	166
x-Toronto	45	21	10	100	258	211
x-Tampa Bay	45	26	6	96	267	231
Florida	39	31	7	85	272	260
Buffalo	37	31	7	81	270	276
Ottawa	37	34	6	80	244	251
Detroit	34	33	9	77	226	252
Montreal	30	41	6	66	219	284

x-clinched playoff berth; z-conference

RESULTS

KINGS 4 AT VANCOUVER 1	Alex Iafallo scored twice, Joonas Korpisalo made 21 saves, and the Kings wrapped up a playoff spot.
AT CALGARY 5 DUCKS 4	Milan Lucic and Michael Stone scored in the third period as the Flames stayed in the hunt for the second wild card.
AT PITTSBURGH 4 PHILADELPHIA 2	Rickard Rakell scored twice, and the Penguins overtook idle Florida for the second wild-card spot in the East.
AT COLUMBUS 4 OTTAWA 3 (OT)	Kirill Marchenko scored 16 seconds into overtime to rally the Blue Jackets, who ended a four-game losing streak.
AT CAROLINA 2 N.Y. ISLANDERS 1	Jordan Martinook scored for the first time in more than two months to break a third-period tie for the Hurricanes.
BOSTON 4 AT ST. LOUIS 3 (SO)	Charlie Coyle scored the shootout winner, and the Bruins recovered from blowing a 3-0 lead for their 60th win.
N.Y. RANGERS 5 AT WASHINGTON 2	Alexis Lafreniere and Kaapo Kakko scored goals just over two minutes apart, and Igor Shesterkin made 26 saves.
AT WINNIPEG 6 NEW JERSEY 1	Nikolaj Ehlers scored two goals, and the Jets tightened their grip on the second wild-card spot in the West.
DETROIT 5 AT TORONTO 2	The Red Wings' Dylan Larkin got his second career hat trick, and the Maple Leafs lost Matt Murray to injury.

TODAY'S GAMES

Vegas at Minnesota, 5 p.m.
Nashville at Dallas, 5:30 p.m.
Arizona at Seattle, 7 p.m.

GOLF

Yin is second Chinese champion

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ruoning Yin became the second Chinese winner in LPGA Tour history Sunday, holding off Georgia Hall in the DIO Implant LA Open at Palos Verdes Estates.

The 20-year-old Yin closed with an eventful one-under-par 70 for a one-stroke victory over Hall, the English player whose five-foot birdie try on the 18th to force a playoff slid by the right side. Recently retired Shanshan Feng is the other only other Chinese champion, winning 10 times on the LPGA Tour.

"That means a lot, not just for me, also for China," Yin said. "Shanshan is always my goal here. ... It's just my first (win). She's the person I look up to."

Yin finished at 15-under 269 at Palos Verdes Golf Club, making six birdies and five bogeys in the final round in her 20th tour start.

She had a nine-hole stretch without a par, making a birdie on No. 2, three straight bogeys, four straight birdies and a bogey on No. 10. After dropping a stroke on No. 13, she birdied No. 14 and parred the final four.

"I fought so hard today," Yin said. "I just made three bogeys in a row on the front nine. I'm so happy that I fought back."

GOLF RESULTS

$8.9-MILLION VALERO TEXAS OPEN
At San Antonio—Par 72
TPC San Antonio—7,438 yards
Final 72-hole results
273 (-15)—$1,602,000
Corey Conners (500)....64-72-69-68
274 (-14)—$970,100
Sam Stevens (300)....72-68-68-66
275 (-13)—$525,100
Matt Kuchar (163)....68-70-69-68
Sam Ryder (163)....71-70-68-66
277 (-11)—$364,900
Patrick Rodgers (110)....66-67-71-73
278 (-10)—$300,375
Byeong Hun An (92)....70-71-68-69
Lee Hodges (92)....74-66-69-69
Chez Reavie (92)....69-72-72-65
279 (-9)—$260,325
Andrew Novak (80)....69-72-70-68

$1.8-MILLION DIO IMPLANT L.A. OPEN
At Palos Verdes Estates—Par 71
Palos Verdes Country Club—6,258 yards
Final 72-hole results
269 (-15)—$262,500
Ruoning Yin....68-64-67-70
270 (-14)—$159,720
Georgia Hall....69-72-62-67
272 (-12)—$102,749
Hyo Joo Kim....66-66-69-71
Patty Tavatanakit....69-67-71-65
273 (-11)—$65,585
Carlota Ciganda....73-71-63-66
Nelly Korda....68-70-68-67
274 (-10)—$43,869
Nasa Hataoka....67-66-71-70
Danielle Kang....71-68-65-70
Minami Katsu....71-70-70-63
275 (-9)—$35,416
Atthaya Thitikul....72-66-66-71

$25-MILLION LIV TOUR, ORLANDO
At Orlando, Fla.—Par 71
Orange County National—7,248 yards
Final 54-hole results
198 (-15)—$4,000,000
Brooks Koepka....65-65-68
199 (-14)—$2,250,000
Sebastian Munoz....62-71-66
201 (-12)—$1,250,000
Dean Burmester....67-70-64
Patrick Reed....67-67-67
202 (-11)—$750,000
Matthew Wolff....67-68-67
Mito Pereira....68-64-68
203 (-10)—$610,000
Dustin Johnson....67-70-66
204 (-9)—$468,333
Peter Uihlein....72-67-65
Carlos Ortiz....70-69-65
Sam Horsfield....70-66-68

Hall closed with a 67, making four birdies in a bogey-free round. She also was second last week in Arizona, losing a playoff to Celine Boutier.

Conners captures Texas Open again

Corey Conners won the Valero Texas Open for the second time in five years for his second PGA Tour title, closing with a four-under 68 for a one-stroke victory over rookie Sam Stevens.

Also the 2019 winner, Conners had a 15-under 273 total on TPC San Antonio's Oaks Course as he heads to this week's Masters, where he tied for sixth last year for his second consecutive top-10 finish at Augusta National.

Patrick Rodgers saw a chance for his first tour victory slip away. He shot a 73 to finish fifth at 11 under.

Koepka is first multiple LIV winner

Brooks Koepka became the first multiple winner in LIV Golf when he closed with a three-under 68, making a four-foot par putt on the final hole for a one-shot victory over Sebastián Muñoz in Orlando, Fla.

"Going into next week, that's what you want to see," said Koepka about his win ahead of the Masters. Seventeen other players in the Saudi-funded league are also headed to the major.

ASHLEY LANDIS Associated Press

RUONING YIN is doused with water after her historic win at the LA Open. She avoided a playoff when Georgia Hall's five-foot birdie try on No. 18 went wide.

BASEBALL

NL STANDINGS

West	W	L	Pct.	GB	L10
DODGERS	2	2	.500	–	2-2
Colorado	2	2	.500	–	2-2
Arizona	2	2	.500	–	2-2
San Diego	2	2	.500	–	2-2
San Francisco	1	2	.333	½	1-2
Central	**W**	**L**	**Pct.**	**GB**	**L10**
Cincinnati	2	1	.667	–	2-1
Milwaukee	2	1	.667	–	2-1
St. Louis	2	1	.667	–	2-1
Chicago	1	2	.333	1	1-2
Pittsburgh	1	2	.333	1	1-2
East	**W**	**L**	**Pct.**	**GB**	**L10**
New York	3	1	.750	–	3-1
Atlanta	2	1	.667	½	2-1
Washington	1	2	.333	1½	1-2
Miami	1	3	.250	2	1-3
Philadelphia	0	3	.000	2½	0-3

Sunday's results

Arizona 2, at DODGERS 1
at Washington 4, Atlanta 1
at New York Yankees 6, San Francisco 0
at Cincinnati 3, Pittsburgh 1
New York 5, at Miami 1
at St. Louis 9, Toronto 4
Milwaukee 9, at Chicago 5
at San Diego 3, Colorado 1
at Texas 2, Philadelphia 1

AL STANDINGS

West	W	L	Pct.	GB	L10
Texas	3	0	1.000	–	3-0
ANGELS	2	1	.667	1	2-1
Houston	2	2	.500	1½	2-2
Oakland	1	2	.333	2	1-2
Seattle	1	3	.250	2½	1-3
Central	**W**	**L**	**Pct.**	**GB**	**L10**
Minnesota	3	0	1.000	–	3-0
Cleveland	3	1	.750	½	3-1
Chicago	2	2	.500	1½	2-2
Detroit	0	3	.000	3	0-3
Kansas City	0	3	.000	3	0-3
East	**W**	**L**	**Pct.**	**GB**	**L10**
Tampa Bay	3	0	1.000	–	3-0
Boston	2	1	.667	1	2-1
New York	2	1	.667	1	2-1
Baltimore	1	2	.333	2	1-2
Toronto	1	2	.333	2	1-2

Sunday's results

ANGELS 6, at Oakland 0
at Tampa Bay 5, Detroit 1
at New York 6, San Francisco 0
at Boston 9, Baltimore 5
at St. Louis 9, Toronto 4
Minnesota 7, at Kansas City 4
Chicago 6, at Houston 3
Cleveland 6, at Seattle 5, 10 innings
at Texas 2, Philadelphia 1

TODAY'S GAMES

NATIONAL LEAGUE >>>

MATCHUP	W-L	ERA	TIME
COL/Feltner (R)	—	—	7 p.m.
Dodgers/Grove (R)	—	—	SNLA
NY/Carrasco (R)	—	—	11 a.m.
MIL/Peralta (R)	—	—	MLB
CHI/Smyly (L)	—	—	3:30 p.m.
CIN/Overton (R)	—	—	
ATL/Morton (R)	—	—	4:45 p.m.
STL/Woodford (R)	—	—	
ARI/Nelson (R)	—	—	6:30 p.m.
SD/Weathers (L)	—	—	

AMERICAN LEAGUE >>>

MATCHUP	W-L	ERA	TIME
Angels/Detmers (L)	—	—	6:30 p.m.
SEA/Kirby (R)	—	—	BSW
TOR/Berríos (R)	—	—	4:30 p.m.
KC/Singer (R)	—	—	
BAL/Bradish (R)	—	—	5 p.m.
TEX/Gray (R)	—	—	
DET/Boyd (L)	—	—	5 p.m.
HOU/Brown (R)	—	—	
CLE/Plesac (R)	—	—	6:30 p.m.
OAK/Kaprielian (R)	—	—	

INTERLEAGUE >>>

MATCHUP	W-L	ERA	TIME
SF/DeSclafani (R)	—	—	Noon
CHI (AL)/Kopech (R)	—	—	
MIN/Mahle (R)	—	—	3:30 p.m.
MIA/Cueto (R)	—	—	
PHI/Walker (R)	—	—	4 p.m.
NY (AL)/Cortes (L)	—	—	
TB/Rasmussen (R)	—	—	4 p.m.
WAS/Williams (R)	—	—	
PIT/Oviedo (R)	—	—	4 p.m.
BOS/Crawford (R)	—	—	

ODDS

NATIONAL LEAGUE

Favorite		Underdog	
at DODGERS	-230	Colorado	+195
at Milwaukee	-120	New York	+100
at Cincinnati	OFF	Chicago	OFF
Atlanta	-122	at St. Louis	+103
at San Diego	-145	Arizona	+125

AMERICAN LEAGUE

Favorite		Underdog	
at Seattle	OFF	ANGELS	OFF
Toronto	-135	at Kansas City	+115
at Texas	-144	Baltimore	+125
at Houston	-245	Detroit	+205
Cleveland	-165	at Oakland	+140

INTERLEAGUE

Favorite		Underdog	
at Chicago White Sox	-130	San Francisco	+110
Minnesota	-120	at Miami	+100
Tampa Bay	-180	at Washington	+155
at New York Yankees	-155	Philadelphia	+135
at Boston	-175	Pittsburgh	+150

LEADERS

NATIONAL LEAGUE >>>

Player	G	AB	R	H	Avg.
Swanson, Chicago	3	12	7	2	.583
Realmuto, Philadelphia	3	11	4	2	.364
Arraez, Miami	4	16	9	2	.563
Goldschmidt, St. Louis	3	12	6	2	.500
Cron, Colorado	4	15	7	3	.467
D'Arnaud, Atlanta	3	13	6	2	.462
W. Smith, DODGERS	3	11	5	2	.455
India, Cincinnati	3	11	5	4	.455
Fraley, Cincinnati	3	9	4	2	.444
Castellanos, Philadelphia	3	11	4	3	.364

Home runs

T. Thompson, DODGERS 3
Cron, Colorado 3

Runs batted in

T. Thompson, DODGERS 8
Cron, Colorado 7

AMERICAN LEAGUE >>>

Player	G	AB	R	H	Avg.
Franco, Tampa Bay	3	11	7	3	.636
A. García, Texas	3	11	5	3	.455
Vázquez, Minnesota	2	7	4	0	.571
Duvall, Boston	3	14	8	6	.571
M. Chapman, Toronto	3	12	6	2	.500
Ward, ANGELS	3	14	7	3	.500
Grossman, Texas	3	9	4	2	.444
Devers, Boston	3	15	7	4	.467
Hays, Baltimore	3	13	6	3	.462

Runs batted in

Duvall, Boston 8

D'BACKS 2, DODGERS 1

Streak	Lost 1	This month	1-1
Home	2-2	Road	0-0
Division	2-2	Interleague	0-0

Next: Tonight vs. Colorado, Dodger Stadium, 7
TV/Radio: SportsNet LA/570, 1020

Arizona	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
J.Rojas 3b	4	0	0	0	.000
Marte 2b	4	0	1	0	.133
Gurriel Jr. dh	4	1	2	0	.250
Walker 1b	4	0	2	0	.429
Carroll lf	4	1	1	0	.214
McCarthy rf	3	0	1	1	.100
Thomas cf	4	0	0	0	.000
Perdomo ss	3	0	2	1	.400
Herrera c	3	0	0	0	.000
Totals	**33**	**2**	**9**	**2**	

Dodgers	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Betts 2b-rf	3	0	1	0	.231
Freeman 1b	3	0	2	0	.333
Smith c	4	1	1	1	.455
Martinez dh	4	0	0	0	.200
Peralta lf	3	0	0	0	.300
a-M.Vrgs 2b	0	0	0	0	.400
Thpsn rf	4	0	0	0	.375
Outman cf	1	0	0	0	.286
b-Barnes	1	0	0	0	.000
Taylor 3b	4	0	0	0	.000
M.Rojas ss	3	0	0	0	.143
c-Heyward	1	0	0	0	.000
Totals	**31**	**1**	**4**	**1**	

Arizona	000	010	001	–	2	9	0
Dodgers	100	000	000	–	1	4	1

a-walked for Peralta in the 8th. b-struck out for Outman in the 9th. c-grounded out for M.Rojas in the 9th.

Walks– Dodgers 4: Betts 1, Freeman 1, M.Vargas 1, Outman 1. **Strikeouts–**Arizona 6: J.Rojas 1, Marte 1, Gurriel Jr. 1, Thomas 1, Perdomo 1, Herrera 1. Dodgers 11: Smith 2, Martinez 2, Peralta 1, Thompson 2, Barnes 1, Taylor 3. **E–**Smith (1). **LOB–**Arizona 5, Dodgers 8. **2B–**Perdomo (1), Marte (1). **HR–**Smith (1), off Davies. **RBIs–**Perdomo (1), McCarthy (1), Smith (5). **SB–**Carroll 3 (3), Outman (1). **RISP**–Arizona 3 for 7; Dodgers 0 for 6. **GIDP–**Carroll, Herrera. **DP–**Dodgers 2 (Betts, M.Rojas, Freeman; Betts, M.Rojas, Freeman).

Arizona	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Davies	5	4	1	1	2	4	83	1.80
K.Nelson	1	0	0	0	0	2	19	0.00
Castro	1⅓	0	0	0	1	2	22	0.00
Chafin, W, 1-0	⅔	0	0	0	1	2	15	0.00
McGough, S, 1-1	⅔	0	0	0	0	1	9	0.00
Dodgers	**IP**	**H**	**R**	**ER**	**BB**	**SO**	**NP**	**ERA**
Syndergaard	6	4	1	1	0	6	78	1.50
Ferguson	1	0	0	0	0	0	16	0.00
Phillips	1	1	0	0	0	0	9	0.00
Graterol, L, 0-1	1	4	1	1	0	0	21	9.00

Inherited runners-scored–Castro 1-0, Chafin 1-0, Ferguson 1-0. **HBP**–Ferguson (McCarthy), K.Nelson (Outman).

U–Ryan Blakney, Marvin Hudson, Hunter Wendelstedt, John Tumpane. **T–**2:32. **Tickets sold–**46,549 (56,000).

ANGELS 6, ATHLETICS 0

Streak	Won 2	This month	2-0
Home	0-0	Road	2-1
Division	2-1	Interleague	0-0

Next: Tonight at Seattle, 6:30
TV/Radio: Bally Sports West/830, 1330

Angels	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Ward lf	5	1	3	0	.500
Trout cf	4	1	3	2	.364
Ohtani dh	4	1	1	1	.333
b-Thaiss dh	1	0	0	0	.000
Renfroe rf	5	1	1	0	.077
Drury 1b	4	0	0	0	.000
Rengifo 2b	2	1	0	0	.000
Urshela 3b	4	0	0	0	.417
O'Hoppe c	4	1	2	3	.400
Fletcher ss	4	0	1	0	.200
Totals	**37**	**6**	**11**	**6**	

Oakland	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Ruiz cf	3	0	0	0	.125
Díaz 3b-ss	4	0	0	0	.273
Brown lf	3	0	0	0	.182
Aguilar 1b	4	0	2	0	.300
Rooker dh	3	0	0	0	.000
c-Noda	1	0	0	0	.000
Laureano rf	2	0	1	0	.222
Langeliers c	4	0	2	0	.200
Kemp 2b	4	0	0	0	.125
Allen ss	2	0	0	0	.000
a-Petrsn 3b	1	0	0	0	.000
Totals	**31**	**0**	**5**	**0**	

Angels	000	330	000	–	6	11	0
Oakland	000	000	000	–	0	5	1

a-struck out for Allen in the 7th. b-grounded out for Ohtani in the 9th. c-struck out for Rooker in the 9th.

Walks–Angels 2: Trout 1, Rengifo 1. Oakland 3: Brown 1, Laureano 2. **Strikeouts–**Angels 6: Ohtani 2, Drury 1, Urshela 2, Fletcher 1. Oakland 9: Díaz 1, Brown 1, Aguilar 1, Rooker 1, Noda 1, Laureano 1, Kemp 2, Peterson 1. **E–**Langeliers (1). **LOB–**Angels 7, Oakland 8. **2B–**Trout (2), Laureano (1). **HR–**O'Hoppe (1), off Waldichuk; Trout (1), off Waldichuk; Ohtani (1), off Waldichuk. **RBIs–**O'Hoppe 3 (6), Trout 2 (2), Ohtani (3).

Runners left in scoring position–Angels 4 (Ohtani 3, Renfroe); Oakland 3 (Kemp, Langeliers, Rooker). **RISP**–Angels 1 for 7; Oakland 1 for 6. **GIDP–**Urshela, Allen.

DP–Angels 1 (Rengifo, Fletcher, Drury); Oakland 1 (Díaz, Kemp, Aguilar).

Angels	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Anderson, W, 1-0	6	4	0	0	2	4	93	0.00
Wantz	2	0	0	0	0	2	24	0.00
Estévez	1	1	0	0	1	3	28	0.00
Oakland	**IP**	**H**	**R**	**ER**	**BB**	**SO**	**NP**	**ERA**
Waldichuk, L, 0-1	5⅔	9	6	6	1	4	96	9.53
Jackson	⅓	1	0	0	1	1	13	0.00
Martínez	3	1	0	0	0	1	40	0.00

Inherited runners-scored–Jackson 1-0. **HBP**–Waldichuk (Rengifo), Anderson (Ruiz). **WP–**Waldichuk, Jackson.

U–Quinn Wolcott, Junior Valentine, Adrian Johnson, Manny Gonzalez. **T–**2:32. **Tickets sold–**14,638 (46,847).

RAYS 5, TIGERS 1

Tampa Bay's Jeffrey Springs was pulled after six hitless innings, Riley Greene got Detroit's first hit with an infield single in the seventh, and the Rays finished a three-game sweep.

Detroit	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Vierling rf	4	0	0	0	.000
Greene cf	4	0	1	0	.182
Báez ss	4	0	0	0	.100
Meadows lf	3	0	0	0	.400
Torkelson 1b	3	0	0	0	.091
Maton 3b	2	0	0	0	.000
Cabrera dh	3	0	0	0	.200
Schoop 2b	2	0	0	0	.000
c-McKtry 2b	1	0	0	0	.167
Rogers c	3	1	1	1	.250
Totals	**29**	**1**	**2**	**1**	

Tampa Bay	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Díaz 1b-3b	4	0	0	0	.300
Franco ss	3	1	2	0	.636
Paredes 3b	3	0	1	1	.222
1-Raley 1b	1	1	0	0	.143
Arozarena lf	3	2	1	1	.300
Ramírez dh	2	0	0	0	.000
a-B.Lowe dh	1	1	1	0	.400
Margot rf	2	0	0	0	.000
b-J.Lowe rf	2	0	1	0	.500
Siri cf	4	0	1	2	.250
Bthancrt c	4	0	0	0	.000
Walls 2b	3	0	1	0	.250
Totals	**32**	**5**	**8**	**4**	

Detroit	000	000	001	–	1	2	0
Tampa Bay	000	103	01x	–	5	8	0

a-walked for Ramírez in the 6th. b-struck out for Margot in the 6th. c-struck out for Schoop in the 8th. 1-ran for Paredes in the 6th.

Walks–Detroit 1: Maton 1. Tampa Bay 2: Franco 1, B.Lowe 1. **Strikeouts–**Detroit 14: Vierling 2, Greene 2, Báez 1, Meadows 1, Torkelson 1, Cabrera 2, Schoop 2, McKinstry 1, Rogers 2. Tampa Bay 4: Margot 1, J.Lowe 1, Siri 1, Bethancourt 1. **LOB–**Detroit 2, Tampa Bay 6. **2B–**Franco (3), J.Lowe (3). **HR–**Rogers (1), off Beeks; Arozarena (1), off Wentz. **RBIs–**Rogers (1), Arozarena (3), Paredes (1), Siri 2 (5). **SB–**Franco (1), Siri (1). **Runners left in scoring position–**Detroit 0; Tampa Bay 4 (Franco, Arozarena, Bethancourt 2). **RISP**–Detroit 0 for 0; Tampa Bay 2 for 8.

Runners moved up–Díaz.

Detroit	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Wentz, L, 0-1	5⅓	4	3	3	1	3	72	5.06
Foley	⅔	1	1	1	1	1	21	6.75
Lange	1	1	0	0	0	0	19	0.00
Shreve	1	2	1	1	0	0	15	4.50
Tampa Bay	**IP**	**H**	**R**	**ER**	**BB**	**SO**	**NP**	**ERA**
Springs, W, 1-0	6	0	0	0	1	12	81	0.00
Poche	1	1	0	0	0	0	13	0.00
Thompson	1	0	0	0	0	1	12	0.00
Beeks	1	1	1	1	0	1	11	9.00

Inherited runners-scored–Foley 1-1. **HBP**–Foley (Arozarena). **WP–**Shreve.

U–Nick Mahrley, Adam Hamari, Jerry Layne, Vic Carapazza. **T–**2:10. **Tickets sold–**19,425 (25,025).

NATIONALS 4, BRAVES 1

MacKenzie Gore did not yield a hit until there were two outs in the fourth inning in his Washington debut. The third pick in the 2017 draft and a key part of the Juan Soto trade fared better than Jared Shuster, who gave up three runs before getting an out in his MLB debut.

Atlanta	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Acuña Jr. rf	2	1	0	0	.231
Olson 1b	3	0	0	0	.364
Riley 3b	4	0	1	0	.200
Albies 2b	4	0	1	0	.333
d'Arnaud dh	4	0	1	1	.462
Ozuna lf	4	0	0	0	.083
Harris II cf	2	0	1	0	.300
Murphy c	2	0	0	0	.000
Arcia ss	3	0	0	0	.364
Totals	**28**	**1**	**4**	**1**	

Washington	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Thomas rf	4	1	2	0	.417
Meneses dh	4	1	1	0	.231
Candlrio 3b	3	1	1	0	.100
Smith 1b	4	1	1	1	.300
Ruiz c	2	0	0	1	.400
Call lf	2	0	0	1	.000
Vargas ss	3	0	0	0	.000
García 2b	2	0	1	1	.100
Robles cf	3	0	0	0	.286
Totals	**27**	**4**	**6**	**4**	

Atlanta	000	100	000	–	1	4	0
Washington	400	000	00x	–	4	6	0

Walks–Atlanta 5: Acuña Jr. 2, Olson 1, Harris II 1, Murphy 1. Washington 5: Candelario 1, Ruiz 2, Call 2.

Strikeouts–Atlanta 6: Acuña Jr. 1, Olson 2, Riley 2, Ozuna 1. Washington 4: Meneses 2, Call 2.

LOB–Atlanta 5, Washington 5. **2B–**Harris II (1), Candelario (1). **RBIs–**d'Arnaud (3), Smith (1), Ruiz (2), Call (2), García (1). **CS–**García (1). **SF–**García.

Runners left in scoring position–Atlanta 3 (Murphy, Riley, Ozuna); Washington 2 (Smith, Robles). **RISP**–Atlanta 1 for 6; Washington 1 for 4. **GIDP–**Arcia, Murphy, Albies, Vargas.

DP–Atlanta 1 (Arcia, Albies, Olson); Washington 3 (Candelario, García, Smith; García, Smith; García, Vargas, Smith).

Atlanta	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Shuster, L, 0-1	4⅓	6	4	4	5	1	79	7.71
Tonkin	2⅓	0	0	0	0	2	36	0.00
Chavez	1	0	0	0	0	1	12	0.00
Washington	**IP**	**H**	**R**	**ER**	**BB**	**SO**	**NP**	**ERA**
Gore, W, 1-0	5⅓	3	1	1	4	6	93	1.69
Harvey, H, 1	⅔	0	0	0	0	0	5	0.00
Ramírez, H, 1	1	1	0	0	0	0	10	0.00
Edwards Jr., H, 1	1	0	0	0	1	0	21	0.00
Finnegan, S, 1-1	1	0	0	0	0	0	8	9.00

Inherited runners-scored–Tonkin 1-0, Harvey 2-0. **PB**–Ruiz (1).

U–Mark Ripperger, Shane Livensparger, Dan Bellino, Phil Cuzzi. **T–**2:17. **Tickets sold–**21,440 (41,376).

RED SOX 9, ORIOLES 5

Adam Duvall had three more hits, including a two-run single to break a fifth-inning tie. Boston became the third team to score at least nine runs in each of its first three games.

Baltimore	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Mullins cf	5	1	2	3	.385
Rtschmn c	5	0	0	0	.400
Sntnder dh	4	0	1	0	.333
Mntcstle 1b	4	0	1	0	.308
Hndrsn ss	3	0	0	0	.000
Vavra lf	4	0	1	0	.250
Hays rf	3	1	1	0	.462
Frazier 2b	4	2	3	2	.625
Urías 3b	3	1	1	0	.250
b-Stowers	1	0	0	0	.000
Totals	**36**	**5**	**10**	**5**	

Boston	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Refsnyder lf	4	1	1	0	.250
Devers 3b	5	1	2	0	.467
Turner 1b	4	1	1	0	.417
Yoshida dh	4	3	2	2	.308
Duvall cf	5	2	3	2	.571
Verdugo rf	4	0	2	2	.357
Arroyo 2b	2	0	0	0	.111
a-Casas	1	0	1	1	.167
1-Chng 2b	1	0	0	0	.000
Hrnndz ss	4	1	2	2	.333
Wong c	4	0	0	0	.000
Totals	**38**	**9**	**14**	**9**	

Baltimore	000	030	200	–	5	10	2
Boston	111	030	21x	–	9	14	0

a-singled for Arroyo in the 7th. b-struck out for Urías in the 9th. 1-ran for Casas in the 7th.

Walks–Baltimore 2: Henderson 1, Hays 1. Boston 4: Refsnyder 1, Turner 1, Yoshida 1, Verdugo 1. **Strikeouts–**Baltimore 10: Rutschman 3, Santander 1, Mountcastle 2, Henderson 1, Vavra 1, Hays 1, Stowers 1. Boston 7: Refsnyder 1, Devers 2, Duvall 1, Arroyo 1, 1-Chang 1, Hernández 1. **E–**Henderson (1), Urías (1). **LOB–**Baltimore 6, Boston 10. **2B–**Urías (1), Frazier (3), Duvall 2 (3). **HR–**Frazier (1), off Houck; Mullins (2), off Houck; Hernández (2), off Irvin. **RBIs–**Frazier 2 (2), Mullins 3 (7), Yoshida 2 (3), Hernández 2 (3), Verdugo 2 (4), Duvall 2 (8), Casas (3). **SB–**Yoshida (1). **S–**Arroyo. **DP–**Boston 1 (Arroyo, Hernández, Turner).

Baltimore	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Irvin, L, 0-1	4	8	6	6	2	4	88	13.50
Baker	2	1	0	0	0	2	25	10.13
Akin	⅓	2	2	2	0	0	8	10.80
Baumann	1⅓	3	1	1	2	1	43	3.38
Boston	**IP**	**H**	**R**	**ER**	**BB**	**SO**	**NP**	**ERA**
Houck, W, 1-0	5	5	3	3	1	5	70	5.40
Schreiber, H, 1	1	0	0	0	1	2	19	0.00
Bleier, H, 1	1	3	2	2	0	2	30	18.00
Martin, H, 1	1	1	0	0	0	0	11	0.00
Ort	1	1	0	0	0	1	23	6.00

WP–Baker, Baumann.

U–Ryan Additon, Dan Merzel, Lance Barksdale, Will Little. **T–**2:44. **Tickets sold–**27,886 (37,755).

YANKEES 6, GIANTS 0

Giancarlo Stanton hit a 485-foot home run, Aaron Judge also went deep, and right-hander Jhony Brito gave up just two hits over five innings in a brilliant major league debut for New York.

San Fran.	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Wade Jr. lf	2	0	0	0	.125
Conforto rf	3	0	0	0	.083
Davis 1b	3	0	1	0	.200
Pederson dh	4	0	0	0	.182
Ystrzski cf	4	0	1	0	.273
Villar 3b	4	0	0	0	.200
Crawford ss	3	0	0	0	.273
Sabol c	3	0	0	0	.143
Estrada 2b	3	0	1	0	.333
Totals	**29**	**0**	**3**	**0**	

New York	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Torres 2b	3	1	1	0	.200
Judge rf	4	1	1	1	.462
Rizzo 1b	1	1	1	1	.375
Stanton dh	3	1	1	2	.250
Dnldsn 3b	3	0	0	0	.182
Cabrera lf	4	0	2	0	.250
K.-Falefa cf	4	0	0	0	.000
Higashka c	4	1	1	1	.250
Volpe ss	3	1	0	0	.222
Totals	**29**	**6**	**7**	**5**	

San Francisco	000	000	000	–	0	3	0
New York	003	100	20x	–	6	7	1

Walks–San Francisco 2: Conforto 1, Davis 1. New York 5: Torres 1, Rizzo 1, Stanton 1, Donaldson 1, Volpe 1. **Strikeouts–**San Francisco 12: Wade Jr. 2, Conforto 1, Davis 1, Yastrzemski 1, Villar 2, Crawford 2, Sabol 1, Estrada 2. New York 6: Judge 2, Donaldson 2, Cabrera 2. **E–**Rizzo (1). **LOB–**San Francisco 6, New York 6. **HR–**Judge (2), off Stripling; Stanton (2), off Stripling; Higashioka (1), off Stripling. **RBIs–**Judge (4), Stanton 2 (3), Higashioka (1), Rizzo (2). **SB–**Torres (2), Volpe (3). **CS–**Rizzo (1). **SF–**Rizzo.

Runners left in scoring position–San Francisco 3 (Pederson 2, Villar); New York 4 (Donaldson, Volpe, Cabrera 2). **RISP**–San Francisco 0 for 5; New York 0 for 6.

Runners moved up–Pederson, Yastrzemski, Kiner-Falefa, Higashioka. **GIDP–**Davis.

DP–New York 1 (Donaldson, Torres, Rizzo).

San Francisco	IP	H	R	ER	BB	SO	NP	ERA
Stripling, L, 0-1	5	6	4	4	2	3	95	7.20
Hjelle	2	0	2	2	3	3	46	9.00
Alexander	1	1	0	0	0	0	14	0.00
New York	**IP**	**H**	**R**	**ER**	**BB**	**SO**	**NP**	**ERA**
Brito, W, 1-0	5	2	0	0	1	6	76	0.00
J.Cordero	⅔	1	0	0	0	2	16	0.00
Marinaccio, H, 1	1⅓	0	0	0	0	3	15	0.00
Brewer	2	0	0	0	1	1	24	0.00

Inherited runners-scored–Marinaccio 2-0. **HBP**–Stripling (Rizzo), J.Cordero (Wade Jr.), Brewer (Wade Jr.). **WP–**Hjelle(3), J.Cordero.

U–Erich Bacchus, Mike Estabrook, Laz Diaz, Andy Fletcher. **T–**2:27. **Tickets sold–**42,053 (47,309).

METS 5, MARLINS 1

Kodai Senga struck out eight in his big league debut, wearing a glove with an image of a ghost and a pitchfork for his "ghost forkball." His day ended with a strikeout of Jazz Chisholm Jr.

New York	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Pham cf-lf	4	1	3	3	.444
Marte rf	5	0	0	0	.357
Lindor ss	2	1	0	0	.154
Alonso 1b	3	1	0	0	.214
Canha dh	3	0	1	0	.308
McNeil 2b	4	0	1	1	.235
Escobar 3b	4	0	0	0	.063
Nido c	4	0	0	0	.000
Locastro lf	1	2	0	0	.000
a-Nimmo cf	1	0	0	0	.200
Totals	**31**	**5**	**5**	**4**	

Miami	AB	R	H	BI	Avg.
Arraez 2b	4	1	2	0	.563
Soler dh	4	0	1	1	.250
Chislm Jr. cf	2	0	0	0	.154
García rf	3	0	0	0	.000
Gurriel 1b	4	0	1	0	.286
Sánchez lf	4	0	0	0	.143
Berti 3b	4	0	0	0	.125
St

BASEBALL

‘Troutani’ powers homer-happy Angels to series victory

O’Hoppe sets tone with three-run blast, and Trout and Ohtani later hit back-to-back shots to rout the A’s.

ANGELS 6
OAKLAND 0

By Sarah Valenzuela

Jed Jacobsohn Associated Press

MIKE TROUT rounds the bases after his fifth-inning, two-run home run, which he said he hit “pretty good,” gave the Angels a five-run lead. Shohei Ohtani followed with a homer of his own on the next pitch in the win.

OAKLAND — The Japanese media have a term for whenever Mike Trout and Shohei Ohtani hit home runs in the same game.

“Troutani? I like that,” Trout said after the Angels beat the Oakland Athletics 6-0 on Sunday at RingCentral Coliseum.

In the opening series finale between the Angels and the A’s, fans got the first iteration of a Troutani this season. It was the 23rd time Trout and Ohtani have hit home runs in the same game and the sixth time they hit back-to-back home runs.

The Angels were already leading 3-0 by the time Trout stepped into the batter’s box against A’s starter Ken Waldichuk in the fifth inning.

Trout hit a towering, two-run shot directly into the green wall behind center field, the ball bouncing back onto the warning track.

He knew it was gone the moment the ball touched his bat.

“I hit that one pretty good,” Trout said. “You gotta break the ice. Once you break the ice, you just go. It’s good to get [the first home run] out of the way in the first series, take a win to Seattle.”

The Angels fans in the crowd cheered and applauded as Trout rounded the bases. But he barely finished celebrating, donning the temporary home run celebration hat — a straw hat with a Golden State Warriors logo on it, which is expected to stay in Oakland — mere moments before it was needed again.

Ohtani homered on the first pitch to the same spot.

“I didn’t even have time to sit down,” Trout joked.

The run support backing the six shutout innings starter Tyler Anderson delivered, combined with the 13 runs the Angels scored Saturday, was a notable difference from their opening night loss. They mustered only one run in that game, though manager Phil Nevin said he was not worried about the offense.

After the Angels’ win Sunday, Nevin explained how the offense has been able to produce the way it has.

“We swung the bats well. We’re swinging at the right pitches, and that’s the thing,” Nevin said. “I like that we’re controlling the zone, keep hitting balls on the barrel, and we’re gonna score a lot of runs.

“We’re deep. We want to be relentless, keep coming at you.”

On Sunday, that run production started with rookie catcher Logan O’Hoppe, who knocked in the first three runs of the game in the top of the fourth inning with a home run.

The homer, the first of his major league career, flew into the gap between the top of the green fence at the 362-foot mark and the bottom of the lowest stands in the outfield.

O’Hoppe didn’t know the hit would be a home run but knew A’s left fielder Seth Brown would not catch it.

“I actually didn’t even see the ball clear,” O’Hoppe said. “I just saw everybody stop, and then I heard the dugout behind me.”

Nearly everyone in the Angels’ dugout stood up straight to watch O’Hoppe’s shot. Ohtani and pitcher José Suarez were among the players who walked out of the rail-less dugout with their arms raised.

“‘Holy crap. I just hit my first homer.’ That was my first [thought],” O’Hoppe said.

O’Hoppe has six RBIs and has driven in at least one run in all three games.

The last Angels player to do that? The first part of Troutani, in 2017.

Anderson gave up four hits, walked two and struck out four.

“I thought [my start] was good,” Anderson said. “We lost that first one here, so to come out today and get a series win is a big thing.”

The Angels head to Seattle for a three-game series with the Mariners.

They have one off day after and then fly back to Anaheim for their first homestand: three games against the Toronto Blue Jays and three with the Washington Nationals.

Upcoming stretch will reveal Angels’ ability to contend

[**Hernández,** from D1]
plus-week period that can’t make their season but can certainly break it.

Starting on April 14, the Angels will play 49 games in 52 days.

“It’s a rough stretch,” Trout said.

The particularly heavy portion of the schedule will open with a seven-game trip that includes visits to the Boston Red Sox and New York Yankees, and finish with another in which they will face the Chicago White Sox and Houston Astros.

Speaking of the Astros, the defending World Series champions and American League West favorites will have six days off over the same 52-day interval.

To navigate this stretch, the Angels will have to answer questions about their roster.

About their position-player depth.

About their rotation depth.

About their bullpen.

And perhaps most important, about their ability to manage Trout and Anthony Rendon, who have missed significant parts of the previous two seasons.

“Obviously, when you see the schedule come out and you look at that, especially early in the year, you gotta keep your body healthy,” Trout said. “My mindset’s [to] play every day and see where it goes. If [manager Phil Nevin] and the front office say that you should sit down, I’m gonna listen to them. Obviously, if I’m feeling good and I wanna get in there, I’m gonna fight it.”

The Angels scored 13 runs in their second game in Oakland, a game in which Ohtani, Trout and Rendon were all in their lineup. Figuring Rendon would play the entire three-game series in Seattle this week, the Angels didn’t play him in the series finale Sunday.

The Angels still scored six runs, the first three on rookie catcher Logan O’Hoppe’s first career homer.

“We added some guys that can play, and you’re seeing it,” Trout said, referring to general manager Perry Minasian’s offseason acquisitions such as Hunter Renfroe and Brandon Drury.

The additional firepower is a necessary luxury, as Trout and Rendon figure to be rested every now and then. As it is, Rendon faces a likely suspension for grabbing a fan by his shirt on opening night.

Tyler Anderson, a breakout performer last year with the Dodgers, pitched six scoreless innings in his Angels debut Sunday. The Angels signed Anderson to a three-year, $39-million deal with hopes he could stabilize their rotation.

The plan to start Ohtani as a pitcher once every six days requires the Angels to have six starters. Whether they can do so effectively will depend on the progress made by 23-year-old Reid Detmers and 25-year-old José Suarez. The team was encouraged by the four scoreless innings pitched by No. 6 starter Tucker Davidson on Saturday in relief of Patrick Sandoval.

The bullpen remains the greatest source of concern. After Aaron Loup and Ryan Tepera combined to give up two runs that cost the Angels the season opener, the group recorded six scoreless innings, but it’s still anyone’s guess how much of that was because of the quality of the Angels’ arms and how much was because of the lack of quality in the Bad News A’s lineup.

Results aside, the absence of high-velocity pitchers in the bullpen is noticeable.

The moment of truth is approaching for the Angels, and it’s approaching faster than usual.

By the time they leave Houston in the first week of June, they’ll know whether they’re actual contenders.

Smith’s homer is Dodgers’ only run

Mark J. Terrill Associated Press

CATCHER WILL SMITH tags out Ketel Marte on a key play in the ninth. But Arizona later pushed across the winning run on a bunt.

[**Dodgers,** from D1]
manager Dave Roberts said. “He was very efficient. He did a great job managing that lineup. ... Unfortunately, we just couldn’t put up a crooked number today.”

An offense that amassed 18 runs and 20 hits in the two games the Dodgers won in the season-opening, four-game series mustered one run — on Will Smith’s 347-foot homer off the left-field foul pole in the first inning — and four hits Sunday.

The top three batters in the order, Mookie Betts, Freddie Freeman and Smith, combined to go four for 10. The bottom six went 0 for 21. The Dodgers struck out 11 times and went hitless in six at-bats with runners in scoring position.

“I still like our lineup,” Roberts said. “I just think there’s a few guys that haven’t gotten on track yet.”

The Diamondbacks broke a 1-1 tie in the top of the ninth off reliever Brusdar Graterol, whose inability to neutralize left-handed hitters and generate enough swings-and-misses — the two biggest reasons the hard-throwing right-hander hasn’t seized a closing role — cost the Dodgers.

Ketel Marte slapped an opposite-field double inside the third-base bag. Lourdes Gurriel grounded a single to right. Betts, who moved from second base to the outfield to start the ninth, charged, fielded the ball cleanly and fired a laser to the plate to nail Marte, a call that was upheld by instant replay.

“To play eight innings of second base, and the first play out there, you throw a strike to home to really impact the game at that point ...” Roberts said, “It’s just pretty special.”

Betts’ second outfield assist of the season provided a temporary reprieve. Christian Walker singled to center. Corbin Carroll grounded into a fielder’s choice to put men on first and third with two outs. Carroll stole second.

Jake McCarthy tapped a drag bunt toward first base. Graterol, one of the best fielding pitchers in baseball, raced toward the line and tried to scoop the ball with his glove and swipe a tag on the speedy McCarthy in one motion. But the ball squirted out of his glove, allowing Gurriel to score for a 2-1 lead. The bunt was ruled a hit.

“Those guys like to do that stuff, so I wasn’t entirely surprised,” Smith, the Dodgers catcher, said of the bunt. “But I’d take [Graterol] as a pitcher fielding his position over anybody. I think he makes that play 99 times out of 100.”

The late run spoiled a Dodgers debut in which Syndergaard’s fastball averaged 92.7 mph and topped out at 94.3 mph. But he had good feel for a 90-mph cut-fastball and kept hitters off balance with an 87-mph changeup that finished four of his strikeouts. He threw 57 of 78 pitches for strikes and induced 13 swinging strikes.

“Physically and mentally, I felt really good,” Syndergaard said. “The changeup and cutter were working well at the beginning of the game. For the most part, I felt confident throwing any pitch in any given count.”

Syndergaard retired the side in order in the second, third, fourth and sixth innings.

He was nicked for a run in the fifth when Carroll singled, stole second and third on consecutive pitches with two outs and scored when Geraldo Perdomo dunked a double to shallow right for a 1-1 tie.

Syndergaard was pulled after yielding a leadoff single to Walker in the seventh and received a rousing ovation as he walked off the field.

“It was awesome,” Syndergaard said. “I’m a big believer in first impressions. New home, new fan base, so I just wanted to go out there and execute and attack hitters and just leave a really good impression. Now we got the first one over, nerves kind of calmed down. All in all, I think it was a really good outing.”

THE DAY IN SPORTS

UCLA's Clark gets honor

STAFF AND WIRE REPORTS

UCLA junior guard **Jaylen Clark** was honored Sunday as the school's first Naismith defensive player of the year, widely considered the nation's top defensive award among college players.

Clark ranked fourth in the nation with 2.6 steals per game before suffering a season-ending leg injury against Arizona on March 4, preventing him from participating in the Pac-12 and NCAA tournaments.

The others honored Sunday were Purdue's **Zach Edey** as the winner of the Naismith Trophy that goes to the nation's most outstanding player and Kansas State's **Jerome Tang** as the Naismith coach of the year.

"I hit every goal on my list," said Clark, who also won the National Assn. of Basketball Coaches defensive player of the year award in addition to being the Pac-12's defensive player of the year. "Unfortunate with the way my season ended, but very proud of myself and I am thankful for my family and everybody around me."

After declaring for the NBA draft last week, Clark revealed Sunday during an interview with the NCAA's **Andy Katz** that he had hired an NCAA-certified agent, preserving his ability to return to UCLA if he opted to withdraw from draft consideration by May 31. Clark also said his recovery timetable from his injury was eight to 10 months, meaning in a best-case scenario he could be playing again by December or January.

Clark is the second player from the Pac-12 to win the Naismith defensive player of the year award, joining Washington's **Matisse Thybulle** in 2019. Other Bruins to win a Naismith award were **Kareem Abdul-Jabbar**, who won the player of the year award in 1969 as Lew Alcindor; **Bill Walton**, a three-time player of the year from 1972 to 1974; **Marques Johnson**, the player of the year in 1977; and **Jim Harrick**, the coach of the year in 1995.

— Ben Bolch

Providence suspended guard **Alyn Breed** after he was charged with pointing a gun at his girlfriend and other crimes over the weekend.

ETC.

Knicks clinch postseason spot

Jalen Brunson and **Quentin Grimes** each scored 27 points, and the host New York Knicks clinched a playoff berth with a 118-109 victory over the Washington Wizards.

Immanuel Quickley added 22 points and **Obi Toppin** had 21 for the Knicks, who won their fourth game in a row and will be in the postseason for the second time in three years. They had missed the playoffs the previous seven seasons.

Mitchell Robinson contributed eight points and 11 rebounds for the Knicks, who have won both games since losing All-Star forward **Julius Randle** to a sprained left ankle.

Kyrie Irving scored 41 points, but **Trae Young** made two free throws with 1.8 seconds left in overtime to give host Atlanta the lead and the Hawks beat the Dallas Mavericks 132-130. ... **Giannis Antetokounmpo** had 33 points, 14 rebounds and six assists, and the host Milwaukee Bucks beat the Philadelphia 76ers 117-104 to move a step closer to the top playoff seed in the Eastern Conference. ... All-Star **Donovan Mitchell** scored 40 points and **Evan Mobley** had 14 points and 16 rebounds as the playoff-bound Cleveland Cavaliers pulled away late for a 115-105 win over the visiting Indiana Pacers. ... **Zach LaVine** scored 36 points, and the host Chicago Bulls used a huge second half to beat the Memphis Grizzlies 128-107 and overcome **Ja Morant's** triple-double. ... **Kevin Durant** scored 35 points, and the visiting Phoenix Suns held off the Oklahoma City Thunder 128-118 for their fifth consecutive victory.

Daniil Medvedev won his fourth ATP title of the year, beating **Jannik Sinner** 7-5, 6-3 in the Miami Open to move to 6-0 in their career matchup.

Chelsea ran out of patience with **Graham Potter**, firing the English manager with the club languishing in the middle of the Premier League standings despite a spending spree on new players totaling $630 million across the last two transfer windows. ... Leicester, which is teetering on relegation, fired manager **Brendan Rodgers** in a late-season bid to preserve its Premier League status after the team's sharp decline. ... Manchester United lost 2-0 at Newcastle, further intensifying the race for the two likely spots behind Arsenal and Manchester City, the Premier League's runaway top two, in Europe's top competition next season. ... AC Milan routed host Napoli 4-0 ahead of two more matchups in the Champions League quarterfinals. ... **Karim Benzema** scored three goals in a seven-minute span as host Real Madrid crushed Valladolid 6-0 in the Spanish league before Madrid faces Barcelona in the semifinals of the Copa del Rey.

STANDINGS

Standings have been arranged to reflect how the teams will be determined for the playoffs. Teams are ranked 1-15 by record. The top six teams in each conference qualify for the playoffs. Teams seven through 10 will participate in a play-in tournament with the top-seeded play-in team meeting the lowest qualifying play-in team. The next-lowest qualifying team would play the second, etc. Head-to-head competition is the first of several tiebreakers, followed by conference record. (Western Conference divisions:S-Southwest; P-Pacific; N-Northwest; Eastern Conference divisions: A-Atlantic; C-Central; S-Southeast).

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Team	W	L	PCT	GB	L10	Rk.
1. y-Denver	52	26	.667		6-4	N1
2. y-Memphis	49	29	.628	3	8-2	S1
3. x-Sacramento	47	31	.603	5	6-4	P1
4. Phoenix	43	35	.551	9	6-4	P2
5. CLIPPERS	41	38	.519	11½	5-5	P3
5. Golden State	41	38	.519	11½	5-5	P4
7. LAKERS	40	38	.513	12	7-3	P5
7. New Orleans	40	38	.513	12	7-3	S2
9. Minnesota	39	40	.494	13½	4-6	N2
10. Oklahoma City	38	41	.481	14½	4-6	N3
11. Dallas	37	42	.468	15½	3-7	S3
12. Utah	36	42	.462	16	3-7	N4
13. Portland	33	45	.423	19	2-8	N5
14. San Antonio	20	58	.256	32	2-8	S4
15. Houston	19	60	.241	33½	2-8	S5

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Team	W	L	PCT	GB	L10	Rk.
1. y-Milwaukee	56	22	.718		7-3	C1
2. x-Boston	54	24	.692	2	7-3	A1
3. x-Philadelphia	51	27	.654	5	5-5	A2
4. x-Cleveland	49	30	.620	7½	7-3	C2
5. x-New York	46	33	.582	10½	7-3	A3
6. Brooklyn	43	35	.551	13	4-6	A4
7. Miami	41	37	.526	15	5-5	S1
8. Atlanta	39	39	.500	17	5-5	S2
8. Toronto	39	39	.500	17	7-3	A5
10. Chicago	38	40	.487	18	7-3	C3
11. Orlando	34	44	.436	22	6-4	S4
11. Washington	34	44	.436	22	3-7	S3
13. Indiana	34	45	.430	22½	3-7	C4
14. Charlotte	26	53	.329	30½	4-6	S5
15. Detroit	16	62	.205	40	1-9	C5

x-clinched playoff berth; y-division

SUNDAY'S RESULTS

LAKERS 134, Houston 109	Portland 107, Minnesota 105
Chicago 128, Memphis 107	Brooklyn 111, Utah 110
Toronto 128, Charlotte 108	New York 118, Washington 109
Atlanta 132, Dallas 130 (OT)	Orlando 128, Detroit 102
S. Antonio 142, Sac. 134 (OT)	Phoenix 128, Okla. City 118
Cleveland 115, Indiana 105	Milwaukee 117, Philadelphia 104
Denver 112, Golden State 110	

TODAY'S GAMES

No games scheduled

LAKERS 134, ROCKETS 109

LAKERS

	Min	FG-A	FT-A	OR-T	A	P	T
James	29	8-18	1-1	2-10	11	1	18
Vanderbilt	15	1-2	0-0	0-4	1	0	2
Davis	30	15-20	10-12	4-9	1	0	40
Reaves	32	4-7	9-10	0-1	8	2	18
Russell	14	2-4	0-1	0-3	4	0	6
Brown Jr.	25	3-3	0-0	1-2	2	0	7
Hachimura	24	10-14	0-2	2-12	1	2	20
Beasley	23	5-14	0-0	0-1	0	1	13
Schroder	17	0-3	1-2	0-3	3	1	1
Gabriel	14	1-3	0-0	2-3	0	1	2
Reed	3	1-1	0-0	0-1	2	0	2
Walker IV	3	2-3	0-0	0-1	1	1	5
Christie	3	0-1	0-0	0-1	2	0	0
Totals		**52-93**	**21-28**	**11-51**	**36**	**9**	**134**

Shooting: Field goals, 55.9%; free throws, 75.0%

Three-point goals: 9-30 (Beasley 3-11, Russell 2-4, Brown Jr. 1-1, Walker IV 1-1, Reaves 1-2, James 1-7, Gabriel 0-1, Hachimura 0-1, Schroder 0-2). Team Rebounds: 7. Team Turnovers: 1. Blocked Shots: 8 (Hachimura 3, Davis 2, Brown Jr., Gabriel, James). Turnovers: 5 (Reaves 2, Gabriel, Hachimura, James). Steals: 4 (Brown Jr. 2, Reed, Vanderbilt). Technical Fouls: None.

HOUSTON

	Min	FG-A	FT-A	OR-T	A	P	T
Martin Jr.	28	5-8	0-0	3-5	1	1	11
Smith Jr.	33	6-12	0-0	1-6	1	4	14
Sengun	38	9-17	0-2	5-15	5	3	18
Green	40	7-21	8-8	1-3	7	3	24
Porter Jr.	36	7-16	0-0	0-3	2	2	20
Eason	25	4-14	0-0	5-8	2	2	9
Christopher	16	4-8	0-0	0-1	2	2	9
Nix	11	0-4	0-0	0-1	2	1	0
Kaminsky	3	1-1	0-0	1-1	1	0	2
Marjanovic	3	1-1	0-0	0-1	0	0	2
Garuba	2	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Totals		**44-102**	**8-10**	**16-44**	**23**	**18**	**109**

Shooting: Field goals, 43.1%; free throws, 80.0%

Three-point goals: 13-34 (Porter Jr. 6-10, Smith Jr. 2-4, Green 2-7, Christopher 1-2, Martin Jr. 1-2, Eason 1-5, Sengun 0-1, Nix 0-3). Team Rebounds: 6. Team Turnovers: 2. Blocked Shots: 4 (Sengun 3, Smith Jr.). Turnovers: 8 (Green 2, Porter Jr. 2, Sengun 2, Marjanovic, Martin Jr.). Steals: 4 (Sengun 2, Eason, Porter Jr.). Technical Fouls: Rockets, 3:24 second

LAKERS	**35**	**35**	**31**	**33—134**
Houston	**21**	**39**	**23**	**26—109**

A—18,204. T—2:02.

Michael Wyke Associated Press

ANTHONY DAVIS scored 40 points in the win. A teammate said, "If he continues to do this, we'll be a problem."

James' triple-double, Davis' 40 lift Lakers

[**Lakers,** from D1]

injury didn't require X-rays. Lakers coach Darvin Ham called Russell's exit "precautionary."

"We just want to put ourselves in position to be able to compete for a championship," James said. "But it's a journey and obviously we don't have as much chemistry as a lot of other teams trying to compete for a championship or that have aspirations to win a championship, but I like what we've been building over the last month or so."

It has allowed James to operate the way he did Sunday, an all-around game that never looked like much of a challenge.

"He had a triple-double tonight, and it was like effortless," Ham said. "Not forcing anything. Not having to play him a crazy ton of minutes, it's a testament to how deep we are now, and different guys being able to step up."

James had 18 points, 10 rebounds and 11 assists in less than 30 minutes, with nine of those assists coming in the first half.

The Lakers finished Sunday with a season-high 35 assists, a big number considering the team is still openly talking about the chemistry it needs to build.

"It's a much more fun brand of basketball to play when the ball is hopping and moving. People making quick decisions, not dribbling two, three extra dribbles, or holding it for two, three, four extra seconds. You're looking. You're reading what the defense is trying to take away, what they're willing to give you, and you make the right play," Ham said. "And the next guy has to do the same thing. Make quick decisions, and make the right reads, and play with pace, and the ball gets spread around."

Rui Hachimura benefited from the pace of the game, playing with a noticeable increase in aggression at the rim on both ends. He finished with 20 points, 12 rebounds and three blocked shots — just the second player since 1983 to have those numbers off the bench in less than 25 minutes.

"Just a physical presence on both sides of the ball, man," Ham said. "Just his ability to score at all three levels, his ability to guard different people, it's huge. It's a huge asset for us."

On Sunday, it was hard not to notice just how complete the Lakers looked — a contrast that was undoubtedly highlighted by the backdrop of the woeful Rockets. Still, like Reaves said, the Lakers look as if they might be a problem instead of being a team overrun by them.

"Great rhythm. Feeling good. Feeling like I'm back to myself before the injury," Davis said. "But we're all playing well. The guys are making it easy for me, letting me have a lot of space at the top, and then when I don't, finding the guys and making the right plays. And guys are making shots.

"Everybody, our whole team is in a great rhythm. and we're playing Lakers basketball, fun basketball. And it's fun and exciting to watch."

NBA BOXES

Suns 128, Thunder 118

PHOENIX

	Min	FG-A	FT-A	OR-T	A	P	T
Durant	34	13-21	6-6	0-5	5	1	35
Okogie	26	1-2	2-4	0-3	2	3	4
Ayton	30	8-12	3-4	2-11	0	1	19
Booker	36	8-14	5-5	1-5	10	4	22
Paul	32	5-9	4-5	0-3	8	5	16
Biyombo	15	1-1	1-1	0-6	0	2	3
Shamet	12	2-5	1-2	0-0	0	1	7
Craig	12	3-5	1-1	0-1	1	5	8
Ross	11	0-2	0-0	2-2	1	1	0
Warren	11	2-5	0-0	0-1	1	2	6
Payne	8	2-4	0-0	0-0	3	5	5
Wainright	7	1-1	0-0	0-1	0	0	3
Totals		**46-81**	**23-28**	**5-38**	**31**	**30**	**128**

Shooting: Field goals, 56.8%; free throws, 82.1%

Three-point goals: 13-34 (Durant 3-7, Warren 2-4, Paul 2-5, Shamet 2-5, Wainright 1-1, Craig 1-2, Payne 1-2, Booker 1-5, Okogie 0-1, Ross 0-2). Team Rebounds: 8. Team Turnovers: None. Blocked Shots: 6 (Durant 2, Biyombo, Craig, Okogie, Wainright). Turnovers: 13 (Booker 5, Paul 3, Durant 2, Ayton, Okogie, Payne). Steals: 4 (Booker, Craig, Paul, Wainright). Technical Fouls: None.

OKLAHOMA CITY

	Min	FG-A	FT-A	OR-T	A	P	T
Dort	39	4-14	4-6	5-8	2	4	14
Jal.Williams	34	5-12	1-1	2-3	2	3	12
Jay.Williams	20	2-3	2-2	2-8	2	2	7
Giddey	34	5-16	4-6	1-9	8	3	16
Gilgs-Alxndr.	37	11-22	17-17	0-3	5	4	39
Wiggins	22	5-8	2-2	0-1	0	2	14
Joe	21	2-6	2-3	0-1	1	1	7
Saric	14	2-3	2-2	2-2	1	2	8
Waters III	10	0-3	1-2	1-6	0	1	1
Dieng	5	0-1	0-0	0-0	0	1	0
Totals		**36-88**	**35-41**	**13-41**	**21**	**23**	**118**

Shooting: Field goals, 40.9%; free throws, 85.4%

Three-point goals: 11-32 (Saric 2-3, Wiggins 2-3, Dort 2-7, Giddey 2-7, Jay.Williams 1-2, Jal-.Williams 1-3, Joe 1-3, Dieng 0-1, Waters III 0-3). Team Rebounds: 11. Team Turnovers: None. Blocked Shots: 0 Turnovers: 8 (Jal.Williams 3, Giddey, Gilgeous-Alexander, Jay.Williams, Joe, Saric). Steals: 7 (Jal.Williams 3, Gilgeous-Alexander 2, Jay.Williams, Waters III). Technical Fouls: Thunder, 9:53 second

Phoenix	**27**	**42**	**29**	**30—128**
Oklahoma City	**27**	**28**	**34**	**29—118**

A—17,981. T—2:23.

Spurs 142, Kings 134, OT

SAN ANTONIO

	Min	FG-A	FT-A	OR-T	A	P	T
Bates-Diop	32	4-5	4-4	1-5	2	2	13
Branham	30	7-12	0-0	0-2	5	3	15
Collins	23	6-13	2-2	0-6	3	6	16
Graham	18	1-6	0-2	0-2	1	0	3
Jones	33	7-11	3-3	2-10	11	1	17
Barlow	29	5-8	2-2	5-10	5	3	12
McDermott	28	9-15	8-9	2-2	1	5	30
Champagnie	28	9-14	4-5	0-6	0	2	26
Mamklshvili.	16	2-5	2-2	3-5	1	0	6
Wesley	16	2-7	0-0	1-4	2	2	4
Langford	7	0-2	0-0	0-0	0	1	0
Totals		**52-98**	**25-29**	**14-52**	**31**	**25**	**142**

Shooting: Field goals, 53.1%; free throws, 86.2%

Three-point goals: 13-34 (Champagnie 4-7, McDermott 4-8, Collins 2-4, Bates-Diop 1-1, Branham 1-5, Graham 1-6, Langford 0-1, Mamukelashvili 0-1, Wesley 0-1). Team Rebounds: 7. Team Turnovers: 1. Blocked Shots: 3 (Barlow 2, Collins). Turnovers: 17 (Wesley 4, Collins 3, Branham 2, Champagnie 2, Langford 2, Mamukelashvili 2, Barlow, Jones). Steals: 8 (Barlow, Branham, Champagnie, Graham, Jones, Langford, Mamukelashvili, Wesley). Technical Fouls: coach Gregg Popovich, 7:15 third.

SACRAMENTO

	Min	FG-A	FT-A	OR-T	A	P	T
Barnes	37	5-12	4-6	2-4	1	1	15
Murray	35	7-10	2-2	2-4	1	3	18
Sabonis	39	9-12	7-12	2-8	6	4	26
Fox	37	10-23	8-8	0-4	4	2	28
Huerter	35	5-17	1-1	0-4	3	1	13
Edwards	22	2-7	1-1	2-6	1	5	6
Davis	16	5-11	2-2	1-3	1	3	15
Mitchell	15	2-3	0-0	0-0	4	0	4
Len	13	3-5	0-0	4-7	2	2	6
Lyles	11	1-3	0-0	0-3	1	2	3
Dozier	0	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Totals		**49-103**	**25-32**	**13-43**	**24**	**23**	**134**

Shooting: Field goals, 47.6%; free throws, 78.1%

Three-point goals: 11-44 (Davis 3-8, Murray 2-4, Huerter 2-12, Sabonis 1-1, Lyles 1-2, Barnes 1-3, Edwards 1-5, Mitchell 0-1, Fox 0-8). Team Rebounds: 9. Team Turnovers: None. Blocked Shots: 5 (Len 2, Lyles 2, Sabonis). Turnovers: 15 (Barnes 3, Len 3, Sabonis 3, Davis 2, Fox, Huerter, Lyles, Murray). Steals: 9 (Barnes 2, Edwards 2, Davis, Len, Lyles, Murray, Sabonis). Technical Fouls: None.

San Antonio	**32**	**31**	**33**	**27—142**
Sacramento	**30**	**28**	**34**	**31—134**

A—18,183. T—2:29.

Raptors 128, Hornets 108

TORONTO

	Min	FG-A	FT-A	OR-T	A	P	T
Anunoby	34	9-13	0-0	1-7	1	2	23
Siakam	38	16-24	2-2	2-7	7	1	36
Poeltl	30	8-12	0-0	4-9	3	3	16
Barnes	36	6-12	0-0	1-3	3	1	12
VanVleet	37	7-17	5-5	1-5	20	4	20
Boucher	16	3-9	1-1	1-5	0	0	7
Koloko	15	3-6	0-0	3-3	0	2	6
Achiuwa	12	4-7	0-0	1-3	0	0	8
Dowtin Jr.	10	0-0	0-0	0-0	4	1	0
Flynn	4	0-3	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Banton	1	0-1	0-0	0-1	0	0	0
Harper Jr.	1	0-0	0-0	1-1	0	0	0
Wieskamp	1	0-0	0-0	0-1	0	0	0
Totals		**56-104**	**8-8**	**15-45**	**38**	**14**	**128**

Shooting: Field goals, 53.8%; free throws, 0.0%

Three-point goals: 8-28 (Anunoby 5-6, Siakam 2-7, VanVleet 1-8, Achiuwa 0-1, Barnes 0-1, Flynn 0-1, Koloko 0-1, Boucher 0-3). Team Rebounds: 6. Team Turnovers: 1. Blocked Shots: 6 (Poeltl 4, Barnes, Koloko). Turnovers: 7 (Barnes 3, VanVleet 2, Achiuwa, Poeltl). Steals: 8 (VanVleet 3, Barnes 2, Siakam 2, Poeltl). Technical Fouls: None.

CHARLOTTE

	Min	FG-A	FT-A	OR-T	A	P	T
McGowens	30	3-6	4-6	0-2	2	1	11
Thor	33	3-7	1-2	0-2	0	2	8
Williams	26	7-15	1-1	7-12	0	2	15
Maledon	40	4-16	0-0	1-8	14	2	8
Mykhailiuk	33	10-17	1-1	2-4	5	1	26
Jones	31	5-10	0-1	0-5	2	2	10
Bouknight	25	7-11	2-2	0-2	1	1	21
Sneed	15	3-3	0-0	0-2	2	0	9
Simmons	1	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	0	0
Totals		**42-85**	**9-13**	**10-37**	**26**	**11**	**108**

Shooting: Field goals, 49.4%; free throws, 69.2%

Three-point goals: 15-31 (Bouknight 5-7, Mykhailiuk 5-9, Sneed 3-3, McGowens 1-2, Thor 1-2, Jones 0-2, Maledon 0-6). Team Rebounds: 7. Team Turnovers: 1. Blocked Shots: 4 (Jones 3, Maledon). Turnovers: 17 (Bouknight 3, Jones 3, Mykhailiuk 3, Maledon 2, McGowens 2, Thor 2, Sneed, Williams). Steals: 3 (Mykhailiuk 2, Jones). Technical Fouls: None.

Toronto	**35**	**32**	**34**	**27—128**
Charlotte	**25**	**27**	**37**	**19—108**

A—16,052. T—1:54.

Knicks 118, Wizards 109

WASHINGTON

	Min	FG-A	FT-A	OR-T	A	P	T
Avdija	34	3-8	2-2	0-3	5	4	9
Kispert	34	10-19	5-5	0-3	0	1	29
Gafford	27	2-2	0-0	1-7	0	3	4
Davis	30	6-11	2-4	0-6	3	3	16
Wright	31	3-9	1-2	1-5	7	0	8
Goodwin	24	5-11	0-0	3-7	6	2	11
Jackson	17	1-4	2-2	0-1	1	2	4
Gibson	16	4-8	2-2	0-2	1	2	14
Nunn	13	4-6	0-0	0-2	0	0	11
Cooks	3	0-0	0-0	0-1	1	1	0
Gill	3	1-1	1-1	0-1	0	0	3
Huff	2	0-0	0-0	0-0	2	0	0
Totals		**39-79**	**15-18**	**5-38**	**26**	**18**	**109**

Shooting: Field goals, 49.4%; free throws, 83.3%

Three-point goals: 16-37 (Gibson 4-5, Kispert 4-11, Nunn 3-4, Davis 2-6, Avdija 1-3, Goodwin 1-3, Wright 1-3, Jackson 0-2). Team Rebounds: 7. Team Turnovers: 1. Blocked Shots: 5 (Gafford 2, Avdija, Cooks, Jackson). Turnovers: 18 (Avdija 8, Nunn 3, Gafford 2, Gibson 2, Wright 2, Kispert). Steals: 9 (Wright 4, Avdija 3, Goodwin, Nunn). Technical Fouls: None.

NEW YORK

	Min	FG-A	FT-A	OR-T	A	P	T
Grimes	41	9-17	3-4	0-2	5	3	27
Toppin	33	9-15	0-0	0-1	4	2	21
Robinson	25	3-4	2-2	4-11	4	2	8
Brunson	39	11-20	4-5	0-3	8	2	27
Quickley	37	8-18	3-4	0-6	5	5	22
Hart	25	1-4	0-0	1-6	3	1	2
Hartenstein	22	4-5	1-3	2-8	2	1	9
McBride	8	1-4	0-0	0-0	0	0	2
Fournier	6	0-1	0-0	0-2	0	1	0
Totals		**46-88**	**13-18**	**7-39**	**31**	**17**	**118**

Shooting: Field goals, 52.3%; free throws, 72.2%

Three-point goals: 13-32 (Grimes 6-11, Quickley 3-6, Toppin 3-8, Brunson 1-3, Fournier 0-1, Hart 0-1, McBride 0-2). Team Rebounds: 6. Team Turnovers: 1. Blocked Shots: 4 (Hart, Hartenstein, Robinson, Toppin). Turnovers: 11 (Brunson 5, Fournier 2, Hart, Hartenstein, Quickley, Toppin). Steals: 12 (Brunson 3, Quickley 3, Hartenstein 2, Robinson 2, Toppin 2). Technical Fouls: None.

Washington	**31**	**30**	**18**	**30—109**
New York	**34**	**19**	**33**	**32—118**

A—19,812. T—2:02.

Blazers 107, Timberwolves 105

PORTLAND

	Min	FG-A	FT-A	OR-T	A	P	T
Thybulle	30	1-6	0-0	1-4	0	5	2
Watford	18	6-8	3-5	0-3	2	1	15
Eubanks	28	5-11	1-2	1-5	2	2	12
Mays	30	6-9	0-0	0-3	9	4	13
Sharpe	34	9-19	7-9	1-6	6	3	27
Knox II	29	8-15	1-3	1-4	1	1	19
Walker	19	2-11	0-0	2-7	3	4	5
Harrison	17	1-3	0-1	0-4	6	2	2
Butler Jr.	17	2-5	0-0	1-1	0	1	5
Watford	13	3-6	0-0	4-5	0	3	7
Totals		**43-93**	**12-20**	**11-42**	**29**	**26**	**107**

Shooting: Field goals, 46.2%; free throws, 60.0%

Three-point goals: 9-30 (Knox II 2-6, Sharpe 2-7, Williams 1-1, Eubanks 1-2, Mays 1-2, Butler Jr. 1-3, Walker 1-4, Harrison 0-1, Thybulle 0-2, Watford 0-2). Team Rebounds: 7. Team Turnovers: None. Blocked Shots: 3 (Eubanks 3). Turnovers: 10 (Eubanks 2, Harrison 2, Mays 2, Knox II, Sharpe, Watford, Williams). Steals: 12 (Harrison 3, Knox II 3, Thybulle 3, Eubanks 2, Walker). Technical Fouls: None.

MINNESOTA

	Min	FG-A	FT-A	OR-T	A	P	T
McDaniels	35	4-7	0-0	0-3	1	1	10
Towns	25	1-3	5-8	2-9	3	5	8
Gobert	35	5-10	0-0	4-15	3	3	10
Conley	35	2-8	5-5	1-4	6	2	11
Edwards	37	15-30	4-5	0-5	6	1	37
Anderson	33	6-9	0-0	0-8	7	3	13
Prince	19	2-8	2-2	0-2	0	0	6
McLaughlin	10	1-1	0-0	0-0	2	1	3
Alexandr-Wlkr	5	2-3	2-3	0-1	1	0	7
Garza	2	0-0	0-0	0-0	0	1	0
Totals		**38-79**	**18-23**	**7-47**	**29**	**17**	**105**

Shooting: Field goals, 48.1%; free throws, 78.3%

Three-point goals: 11-26 (Edwards 3-8, McDaniels 2-4, Conley 2-6, Alexander-Walker 1-1, McLaughlin 1-1, Towns 1-1, Anderson 1-2, Prince 0-3). Team Rebounds: 8. Team Turnovers: None. Blocked Shots: 5 (McDaniels 4, Anderson). Turnovers: 18 (Edwards 4, McDaniels 4, Towns 3, Prince 2, Anderson, Conley, Garza, Gobert, McLaughlin). Steals: 3 (McDaniels 2, Edwards). Technical Fouls: None.

Portland	**31**	**25**	**26**	**25—107**
Minnesota	**29**	**33**	**24**	**19—105**

A—18,978. T—2:17.

Cavaliers 115, Pacers 105

INDIANA

	Min	FG-A	FT-A	OR-T	A	P	T
Nesmith	32	4-9	3-6	2-6	2	3	14
Nwora	35	4-15	5-6	3-10	3	0	15
Jackson	20	1-5	1-2	0-2	1	4	3
Mathurin	32	5-12	8-8	3-9	0	5	19
Nembhard	31	6-14	0-0	0-2	8	1	13
Smith	27	5-8	1-1	2-8	0	4	12
Hield	22	3-8	3-3	1-5	1	2	10
McConnell	19	7-8	2-2	0-2	5	4	16
Brissett	17	1-4	1-1	0-0	1	3	3
Totals		**36-83**	**24-29**	**11-44**	**21**	**26**	**105**

Shooting: Field goals, 43.4%; free throws, 82.8%

Three-point goals: 9-24 (Nesmith 3-4, Nwora 2-8, Mathurin 1-2, Nembhard 1-2, Smith 1-2, Hield 1-4, Brissett 0-2). Team Rebounds: 8. Team Turnovers: 2. Blocked Shots: 6 (Jackson 2, Mathurin 2, Smith 2). Turnovers: 15 (Mathurin 4, Nembhard 3, Hield 2, Jackson 2, McConnell 2, Brissett, Nwora). Steals: 5 (Nembhard 3, Hield 2). Technical Fouls: None.

CLEVELAND

	Min	FG-A	FT-A	OR-T	A	P	T
E.Mobley	39	7-17	0-0	5-16	4	3	14
Wade	27	2-3	0-0	2-5	1	3	5
Allen	26	6-9	3-6	4-7	1	1	15
Garland	39	8-20	2-2	1-3	6	2	20
Mitchell	39	14-25	9-12	0-6	1	4	40
LeVert	33	5-10	3-4	0-3	4	6	15
Rubio	14	0-1	0

HIGH SCHOOLS

Switching turf tees up a dream career

Valencia went from Salesian lineman to caddie school, and his scholarship puts him on path to be doctor.

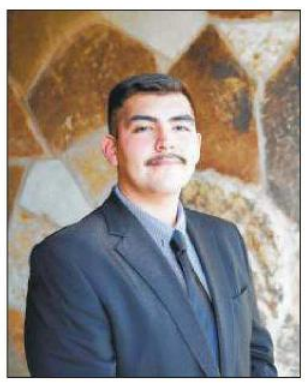
ERIC SONDHEIMER
ON HIGH SCHOOLS

Two years into his high school football days as an offensive lineman at Los Angeles Salesian High, Isaec Valencia changed plans. He gave up football and focused on caddie school.

He put good use to the strength gained from his days in the weight room. Carrying a golf bag was much easier than learning the rules and etiquette of golf.

"At first, it seemed like a lot," he said. "I had no idea of any rules of golf."

After three years at the Western Golf Assn.'s Caddie Academy, the 17-year-old Valencia received life-changing news. He was awarded a $125,000 Evans Scholarship, which will enable him to attend the University of Washington, study biological sciences and pursue his dream of becoming a family practitioner.



Courtesy of Western Golf Assn.

ISAEC VALENCIA cites his mother, Judith, as a source of inspiration.

With a single mother, Judith, who came here from Mexico and worked and studied to become an accountant, Valencia said he was grateful he would be able to attend college thanks to the scholarship.

"This scholarship was a huge financial burden lifted off my family and myself," he said. "It gives me the ability to continue to work hard and make my family proud."

His dream is to attend medical school and return to his Boyle Heights neighborhood as a doctor to help others.

"I really love helping people and being useful," Valencia said. "Being able to make such a huge difference in communities would make a positive impact on future generations."

Valencia lives with his mother, 15-year-old brother and grandparents. He spent two summers in Chicago as a caddie. During the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, caddie school was only online, so that was a challenge learning without hands-on experience.

He has learned how to read the line for putting, gauge the length needed for shots to reach the hole and, most importantly, keep track of the ball off the tee.

He came in as a shy teenager but learned to feel comfortable holding conversations with golfers to make the rounds enjoyable.

There are more than 1,100 caddies enrolled at 22 universities across the country as Evans Scholars, and more than 11,800 have participated since the inception of the program.

Several former Salesian students participated in the program, and that's how Valencia got involved as a freshman. At 6 feet and 240 pounds, he's certainly big and strong enough to carry a bag filled with clubs and balls for 18 holes. But that's just one of many responsibilities for a caddie.

Valencia learned his responsibilities from scratch.

"It was repetition, going out at different times with different golfers that gave me the ability to learn," he said.

He also credits his experience at Salesian for putting him on the right path.

"We're taught about the lesson of community," he said. "There always needs to be a support system for each other. It makes a world of difference."

As for Valencia playing golf, he said his best skill would be putting.

He's grateful for his mother's inspiration and sacrifices to show him how to succeed.

"She was always working hard in any situation," he said. "Many days and many nights, I saw her working hard going to Cal State Los Angeles and working at the same time. It goes to show how tough a person she is and her determination to be successful."

PREP BASEBALL TOP 25

By Eric Sondheimer

Rk.	School (W-L)	Comment (last week's ranking)
1	SHERMAN OAKS N.D. (16-2)	Opens play in Boras Classic on April 11 vs. San Dimas (1)
2	HUNTINGTON BEACH (12-6)	Oilers have 10 consecutive wins after taking National High School Invitational title (15)
3	SANTA MARGARITA (14-3)	Collin Clarke keeps delivering top performances on the mound (2)
4	GAHR (11-2-1)	Faces Aliso Niguel on Monday (3)
5	CYPRESS (14-4)	Ten consecutive wins for the Centurions (4)
6	MATER DEI (12-5-1)	Pitching key to Monarchs' turnaround (7)
7	CRESPI (12-5-3)	The return of ace Isaiah Magdaleno makes Celts dangerous in Division 2 (8)
8	CORONA (11-3)	Panthers get three-game sweep of Norco (10)
9	VILLA PARK (12-3)	Spartans are 4-1 in league play (5)
10	AQUINAS (9-2)	Went 3-1 in the NHSI (9)
11	JSERRA (10-7)	Lions beginning to make progress (16)
12	ORANGE LUTHERAN (10-8-1)	Inconsistent hitting leading to inconsistent season (6)
13	GARDEN GROVE PACIFICA (14-2)	Won Loara tournament championship (17)
14	HARVARD-WESTLAKE (9-7)	Wolverines head to Las Vegas for tournament (11)
15	BONITA (9-2)	Bearcats begin tournament in Inland Empire (14)
16	ETIWANDA (8-2)	Eagles getting sharp after rainouts (20)
17	SAN DIMAS (11-2)	Faces Mira Costa on Monday (19)
18	SOUTH HILLS (12-3)	Junior Paul Vazquez has hit three home runs (18)
19	LA SERNA (13-2)	Nick Williams has 40 strikeouts in 30⅓ innings (22)
20	LA MIRADA (9-4)	Games against Downey and Warren this week (12)
21	CORONA SANTIAGO (8-4)	Sharks are hanging tough in Big VIII League (NR)
22	CORONA CENTENNIAL (13-3)	Huskies are in third place in Big VIII League (13)
23	ARCADIA (14-1)	Ian Hoffstetter is 6-0 with a 1.34 ERA (NR)
24	BISHOP AMAT (11-2)	Lancers are on eight-game winning streak (NR)
25	PALISADES (10-1)	Dolphins have a standout pitcher in Mason Edwards (NR)

Girls' flag football ready to tackle some questions

CIF's newest sport has rules, but several issues still need to be addressed as schools gear up this fall.

By Luca Evans

They rose as one, a group of about 20 high school girls standing in front of the Irvine Unified School District Board of Education, each raising a piece of paper with a different word scribbled.

Equality. Opportunity. Hope. Empowered. Badass. All showing, as University High junior Leah Schulman announced to the board via public comment March 14, what playing flag football meant to them. It was an emphatic demonstration designed to nudge the board toward passing applications for flag football programs at Irvine high schools such as Woodbridge and University.

"Now," said University coach Justin Schulman, "at least they know we're watching."

And for the kicker, Schulman invited members of a local youth team to speak. A handful of elementary school girls walked up, each carrying custom-made signs they presented to the board.

"I love flag football — let us play," one read, in a tone that would melt even the most frozen of hearts.

Craig Weston For The Times

CRENSHAW'S De'CHELLE BRACKETT runs down the sideline during a League of Champions game. Schools are expected to field CIF teams this fall.

As such community showings of support grow for girls' flag football — Oak Park High holding an interest meeting Wednesday that drew dozens, coaching hires becoming official at schools around the Southland — the CIF took another massive step toward an uncharted future Wednesday, distributing a flag football rulebook to member sections.

Individual sections can evaluate interested programs and districts to set up schedules. The City Section currently has three dozen schools committed to playing, according to sports information director Dick Dornan. Paula Hart Rodas, president-elect of the Southern Section council, said the council would likely know a full list of participating teams by July.

Each step forward, though, brings another wave of questions. Here are some of the latest developments.

Rules

For the most part, CIF associate executive director Brian Seymour said, the state rulebook was designed to give schools flexibility in regard to scheduling and field space. Coaches are thrilled that clearer guidance, including a rulebook, exists.

But they disagree with many of the specifics.

An analysis:

■ Games will be played in two 20-minute halves, with a running clock until the last two minutes of each half.

Reasoning: The time frame allows schools to play a game every hour, Seymour said, important for potential "league nights" in which every member of a league can participate in a one-day round of play to fit in as many games as possible.

Argument: "Way too short," Schulman said.

■ There's no screening or blocking

Reasoning: The NCAA has its own set of rules for every sport separate from high school, Seymour said. And the CIF wants to eliminate as much contact as possible given the potential of injury.

Argument: Screening would help to develop quarterbacks for the college level, where more contact is allowed, said Gardena Serra coach Monique Adams.

■ Runners cannot leap or spin to evade a flag grab.

Reasoning: Full spins, Seymour said, could invite more contact, which the CIF wants to limit.

Argument: "That's the whole point of flag football — it's showcasing your athleticism and your skills and ability. ... That's kind of shocking," Adams said when told runners couldn't spin.

Scheduling around officiating

How, exactly, are flag football teams going to construct a schedule around a widespread referee shortage — particularly playing in the fall during tackle football season?

"It's going to be incredibly difficult," said Orange County football referee Jeff Roberts, former president of the Orange County Officials Assn.

There are conflicts at every turn. Football officials would be stretched thin if games were held Thursdays, when many junior varsity tackle games are scheduled, or even Saturdays, when Pop Warner games take place. The best bet, Roberts said, would be games scheduled for Monday or Tuesday — the tentative plan some districts are exploring in that one-night format.

Who will compete?

In the inaugural season, there will be no playoffs in the Southern Section, only a potential end-of-year tournament. The City Section likely will hold playoffs, according to Dornan, who said the section needed only six schools to field teams to have a postseason tournament. In the Southern Section, 20% of all schools need to field a team, and an initial season is needed to determine how to sort teams into playoff divisions.

Whatever results are measured, Long Beach Poly and Gardena Serra enter as major favorites — Serra beat its rival in the final of the winter girls' flag football "League of Champions," which is sponsored in part by the Rams and Chargers, USA Football and Nike.

Look out for Redondo Union, which has a mob of talent at wide receiver, very important in a 7-on-7 game in which everyone behind the line of scrimmage is an eligible target. Surf League schools such as Huntington Beach and Los Alamitos will likely field strong programs.

It will be a strange, learn-on-the-fly first season come fall, but seniors, in particular, are happy for the chance to cinch a belt for their high school — and establish the ground floor of a new sport for generations to come.

"I think it's really about the legacy that we create and leave for the little girls that are coming up behind us," Woodbridge's Milan Heisdorf said.

SOFTBALL NOTES

Rule change allows players to wear their precious jewelry

By Luca Evans

A couple of days after her mother died, when everything felt unreal and frustrating, **Jordyn Lawhon** put on the necklace for the first time.

It is a simple heart-shaped token, shimmering silver against her gray Villa Park uniform. It was a piece of her mother's jewelry. Lawhon would always plead to wear it, and her mom said no because there was a tiny, *tiny* knot in the chain. No messing it up.

Within a two-week whirlwind in January 2022, the woman who kept her grounded went from healthy to sick with COVID-19 to whisked away in an ambulance. It was the last time the family saw her. A couple of days later, Lawhon's dad used a pair of tweezers to fix the knot.

Lawhon put it on and never took it off. Not until spring, when umpires would spot the shortstop trying to tuck it under her jersey and order her to take it off. Those were the rules for high school athletics.

"I got so mad about it," Lawhon said.

This spring, though, a vote by the National Federation of State High School Assns. made it legal for high school softball players across the nation to wear jewelry. The impact is everywhere: The phrase "look good, play good" is ingrained in softball culture, multiple coaches said, and jewelry is a chance for high school players to feel comfortable in their individuality.

Luca Evans Los Angeles Times

GAHR'S Amarie Allen said wearing the necklace that honors her late father "helps my attitude a lot."

The freedom carries a deeper, poignant impact for many: the chance to carry a memento of a loved one onto the field. A comfort in moments of anxiety.

"That's why," Lawhon said of her mother's necklace, "she's always going to be super close to my heart."

Ritual is inherent in baseball and softball, baked into each stride to the batter's box, each warmup between innings. And jewelry, Cerritos Gahr's **Amarie Allen** said, is an extension of that ritual, providing a sense of stability for athletes.

"The girls now are able to be themselves," Orange El Modena coach **Robert Calderon** said.

When Allen turned 15 during her sophomore year, her mother gave her a gold necklace with a charm of the letter "R." It was a memento honoring her father, **Rady**, who died a couple of years earlier from a heart attack. He was Allen's best friend and safe place; when anxiety hindered her on and off the field, he would help her breathe.

During the summer, Allen had surgery, keeping her off the field for two months. Two days after she returned in the fall, she was tabbed to hit in a scrimmage — and panicked. Pacing in the dugout.

She reached her hand underneath her jersey, pulling the necklace from underneath a turtleneck and clasping it with both hands. Breathing. Like her dad taught her.

"It helps my attitude a lot," Allen said of wearing her necklace. "Because before, I would be so sad. ... I would just want to go home, go to my room and just go to sleep.

"But now," she continued, "I feel like I have more of a reason to be here."

The same purpose burns within teammate **Rio Mendez**, a junior shortstop who wears a gold necklace given to her by grandmother **Norma**. A month ago, Mendez said, doctors diagnosed Norma with Stage 4 pancreatic cancer, saying she had months to live.

Forty years ago, Mendez said, her grandmother's brother gave her that same necklace, handcrafted with her name engraved in the shape of their home country Puerto Rico. Now, if it's not around her neck, Mendez feels as if something is missing.

"Make people remember me," Mendez, a Utah softball commit, said of the necklace. "Make people look up to me. It really gives me that fire."

Not all are in favor of the rule change. Grand Terrace coach **Robert Flores** doesn't permit his players to wear jewelry, citing the potential risk for injury caused by an earring or lip piercing if a ball takes a bad hop.

But for teams such as Gahr that have embraced the rule, it has made a noticeable difference.

"It just feels different," Allen said, "walking onto the field knowing that you have a piece of someone with you."

Stellar pitching performances

Within two days, two superb pitching performances were delivered.

On Friday night, Orange Lutheran's **Brianne Weiss** struck out 20 in a 3-0 win over Chula Vista Mater Dei.

The next day, Burbank freshman **Maddison Kellogg** struck out 22 in 12⅔ innings in a 1-0 loss to Crescenta Valley.

NFL MOCK DRAFT 2.0

Big trade could be a Panthers surprise

SAM FARMER
ON THE NFL

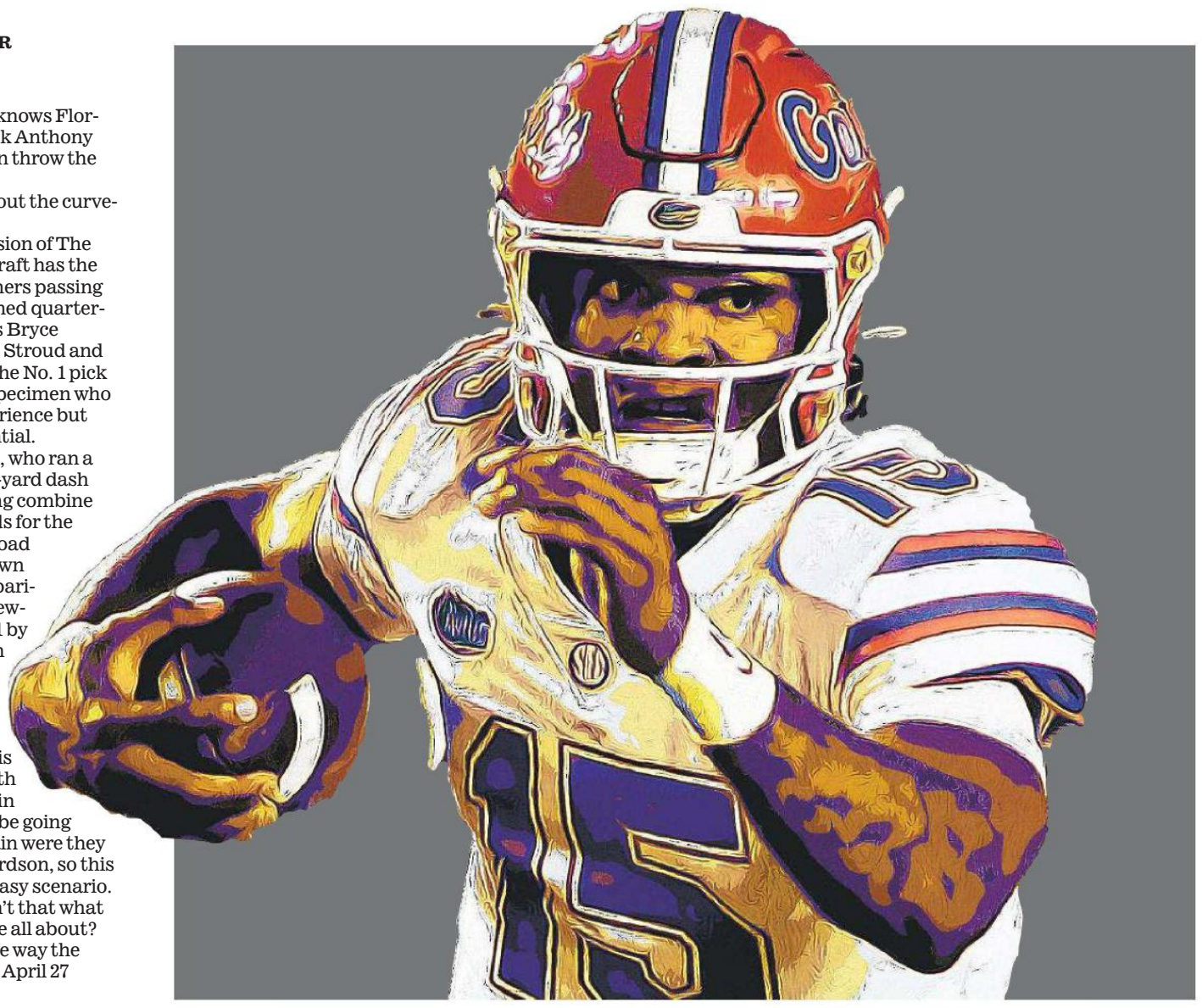


PHOTO OF ANTHONY RICHARDSON BY PHIL SEARS Associated Press; PHOTO OF WILL LEVIS BY MICHAEL CLUBB Associated Press; PHOTO OF DEVON WITHERSPOON BY NATI HARNIK Associated Press; PHOTO ILLUSTRATIONS BY TIM HUBBARD Los Angeles Times

FLORIDA'S Anthony Richardson, top, might have the most upside for a quarterback in the draft, and Kentucky's Will Levis, left, adds to the position's talent. Devon Witherspoon, right, could be the top cornerback.

Everybody knows Florida quarterback Anthony Richardson can throw the deep ball.

But how about the curveball?

This 2.0 version of The Times' mock draft has the Carolina Panthers passing on more seasoned quarterback prospects Bryce Young and C.J. Stroud and instead using the No. 1 pick on a physical specimen who is light on experience but heavy on potential.

Richardson, who ran a 4.43-second 40-yard dash and set scouting combine position records for the vertical and broad jumps, has drawn favorable comparisons to Cam Newton, taken No. 1 by the Panthers in 2011.

The Panthers — who traded up to the top spot this year, clearly with a quarterback in mind — would be going against the grain were they to select Richardson, so this is a bit of a fantasy scenario. Then again, isn't that what mock drafts are all about?

A look at one way the opening round April 27 could unfold:

1. Carolina: QB Anthony Richardson, Florida — There are more polished and NFL-ready quarterbacks, but none can match Richardson's athleticism and upside.

2. Houston: QB Bryce Young, Alabama — The Texans, ready to move on from Davis Mills, rebuild around a leader who's ready to step in and play on opening day.

3. Arizona: Edge Will Anderson Jr., Alabama — J.J. Watt and Zach Allen are gone, and Jonathan Gannon is looking to shore up the NFL's second-worst scoring defense.

4. Indianapolis: QB C.J. Stroud, Ohio State — The Colts run up to the podium in this scenario. Stroud has all the tools to be successful right off the bat.

5. Seattle: QB Will Levis, Kentucky — Yes, the Seahawks have Geno Smith in the near term. But they're also not bluffing when it comes to their interest in this quarterback class.

6. Detroit: CB Devon Witherspoon, Illinois — Head fake by the Lions. They wait for an edge rusher and instead take the first corner off the board.

7. Las Vegas: Edge Tyree Wilson, Texas Tech — If Witherspoon is gone, Raiders go for youth and explosiveness on the edge. Wilson can learn at the elbow of Chandler Jones.

8. Atlanta: DT Jalen Carter, Georgia — Even with off-the-field red flags, Carter would be a steal this low. Local star could roll right into an impactful NFL gig.

9. Chicago: DT Bryan Bresee, Clemson — The Bears have the worst defensive line in football, and they need a right offensive tackle. So they're focused on rebuilding in the trenches.

10. Philadelphia: Edge Myles Murphy, Clemson — The Eagles are always going to default to improving their lines. Defensive tackle here, or an edge who can eventually replace 35-year-old Brandon Graham.

11. Tennessee: OT Peter Skoronski, Northwestern — The Titans need a tackle to replace Taylor Lewan, and Skoronski is widely considered among the top two in this class.

12. Houston: WR Jaxon Smith-Njigba, Ohio State — The Texans need help on their defensive line too, but this Buckeyes star is too tempting here.

13. New York Jets: OT Broderick Jones, Georgia — The Jets are going to have a 39-year-old quarterback they need to protect. LT Duane Brown is going to be 38, and RT Mekhi Becton hasn't played much for two seasons.

14. New England: DE Lukas Van Ness, Iowa — The Patriots might have more pressing needs at tackle, wide receiver and cornerback, the versatile Van Ness — who can play inside or outside — fits the Bill Belichick mold.

15. Green Bay: TE Michael Mayer, Notre Dame — Mayer, who caught more passes than any tight end in school history, would be an able replacement for Robert Tonyan.

16. Washington: CB Christian Gonzalez, Oregon — Gonzalez might not slip past the Raiders. The Commanders would quickly turn in their card on draft night should he get pushed down this far.

17. Pittsburgh: OT Paris Johnson Jr., Ohio State — The Steelers certainly want to address their defense and might do so with their first pick. But a tackle here makes sense too.

18. Detroit: Edge Nolan Smith, Georgia — Having addressed their need at corner with their first pick, the Lions circle back and bolster their defensive front.

19. Tampa Bay: OT Darnell Wright, Tennessee — The Buccaneers need to get a tackle, left or right. If they don't get a left tackle, they will move Tristan Wirfs from the right side to left.

20. Seattle: Edge Keion White, Georgia Tech — It's not Pete Carroll's style to take a corner here; the Seahawks tend to find them later. Taking an edge rusher is on brand.

21. Chargers: TE Dalton Kincaid, Utah — The Chargers could go lots of directions — running back would be a fit too — but a tight end or wide receiver would be a nice gift for Justin Herbert.

22. Baltimore: WR Jordan Addison, USC — With Marquise Brown in Arizona and Rashod Bateman coming back from injury, a young and versatile receiver would be a fit here.

23. Minnesota: CB Joey Porter Jr., Penn State — If he's still on the board, Porter would be a good fit in the scheme of new defensive coordinator Brian Flores.

24. Jacksonville: DB Brian Branch, Alabama — Branch could play safety or corner, basically wherever he's needed, for a defense that was fifth worst against the pass last season.

25. New York Giants: C John Michael Schmitz, Minnesota — The Giants need help at center, and the best interior offensive lineman is still on the board in this scenario.

26. Dallas: WR Jalin Hyatt, Tennessee — The Cowboys are looking for a true No. 2 receiver to pair with CeeDee Lamb.

27. Buffalo: WR Zay Flowers, Boston College — Flowers put up big numbers at BC last season and would get even better with Stefon Diggs as a route-running mentor.

28. Cincinnati: CB Cam Smith, South Carolina — Smith could be a replacement for Eli Apple, now a free agent.

29. New Orleans: RB Bijan Robinson, Texas — The Saints addressed their need for a quarterback by signing Derek Carr and now can give Carr another Josh Jacobs.

30. Philadelphia: DT Calijah Kancey, Pittsburgh — Javon Hargrave is gone, and Fletcher Cox is in the sunset of his career. Great opportunity for Kancey.

31. Kansas City: DT Siaki Ika, Baylor — At 6 feet 4 and 357 pounds, Ika would be a run-stopping mountain in the middle for the defending Super Bowl champions.

AUTO RACING

After further review, Larson gives Hendrick another win

WIRE REPORTS

Kyle Larson spent the week watching videos of his 10-win, 2021 championship season, he said, "to remind myself that I used to be good."

He still is. Larson pulled away on a restart with 14 laps to go and easily won the Cup Series race at Richmond (Va.) Raceway on Sunday.

"I just really wanted to look at old tape of myself and see where my mindset was and to see my confidence," Larson said after his 20th career victory in NASCAR's top series.

Larson started the final green flag run with Hendrick Motorsports teammate Josh Berry to his outside and beat Berry into the first turn. Berry, who is filling in for the injured Chase Elliott, held on for second, followed by Ross Chastain, Christopher Bell and Kevin Harvick.

It's the third victory of the season for the four-car Hendrick team and came less than a week after a 100-point penalty against each driver for using an illegal part was overturned by a NASCAR appeals panel. It also came with a fill-in crew chief in Kevin Meendering because the appeals panel upheld the four-race suspensions of all four team crew chiefs.

"I was just happy to fill a gap and help those guys out in a tough situation," Meendering said. "This is a testament to all the hard work [of] those guys."

Chevrolet took the top three spots and has won five of the seven races this season.

All the Hendrick cars except for Berry ran in contention all race, with William Byron, the only two-time winner this season, leading a race-high 117 laps and running fourth for a restart with 21 laps to go. The field bunched up heading into Turn 1, and Bell hit his left rear quarter panel, sending Byron spinning. He finished 24th.

Ashley, Hagan, Glenn earn victories

At the NHRA Winternationals in Pomona, Justin Ashley won the top fuel class for the second week in a row, beating Auston Prock — 3.71 seconds to 3.73 — for his seventh career victory. Ashley also won at the Arizona Nationals last week.

Matt Hagan (funny car) and Dallas Glenn (pro stock) also won their classes.

All three drivers are also the new points leaders.

Hagan posted career win No. 45, defeating reigning world champion Ron Capps in funny car with a 3.96 clocking in the final. Glenn edged Matt Hartford in the pro stock final 6.54 to 6.55. The victory is his fifth in pro stock and sixth overall.

Newgarden prevails under yellow

Josef Newgarden won at Texas Motor Speedway in Fort Worth for the second consecutive year when a thrilling wheel-to-wheel battle with Pato O'Ward came to a halt because of a crash behind them.

Newgarden and O'Ward — at one point the only two drivers on the lead lap — frantically swapped the lead over and over during the final third of the race, and neither showed any inclination to lift off the gas in the fight for the win. The two even bumped wheels at nearly 215 mph with two laps remaining.

But then Romain Grosjean crashed while running fifth as the leaders took the white flag, IndyCar threw the caution and Newgarden won under yellow.

Verstappen survives drama in Australia

Red Bull's Max Verstappen won his first Australian Grand Prix in remarkable circumstances in a chaotic Formula One race filled with drama from the green light to the checkered flag.

Although Red Bull's first triumph in Melbourne since 2011 was expected, the carnage that unfolded in the latter stages of the race made it a hard-fought triumph.

Seven-time world champion Lewis Hamilton, who drove superbly in his Mercedes, finished second, while Aston Martin's Fernando Alonso filled the third spot on the podium.

"That is a really good weekend for us. I am happy with that," Verstappen said to his team via radio.

AUTO RACING RESULTS

NASCAR
Cup Series
Toyota Owners 400
At Richmond, Va.
Richmond Raceway
Track: 0.75 miles

1. Kyle Larson, Chevrolet, 400 laps, 52 points. 2. Josh Berry, Chevrolet, 400, 0. 3. Ross Chastain, Chevrolet, 400, 48. 4. Christopher Bell, Toyota, 400, 45. 5. Kevin Harvick, Ford, 400, 41. 6. Michael McDowell, Ford, 400, 31. 7. Joey Logano, Ford, 400, 36. 8. Alex Bowman, Chevrolet, 400, 37. 9. Ty Gibbs, Toyota, 400, 29. 10. Brad Keselowski, Ford, 400, 34.

DRAG RACING
NHRA Winternationals
At Pomona
In-N-Out Burger Pomona Dragstrip
Final results

TOP FUEL: 1. Justin Ashley; 2. Austin Prock; 3. Antron Brown; 4. Brittany Force; 5. Shawn Langdon; 6. Mike Salinas; 7. Steve Torrence; 8. Tony Schumacher; 9. Josh Hart; 10. Clay Millican; 11. Leah Pruett; 12. Krista Baldwin; 13. Doug Kalitta; 14. Ron August.

FUNNY CAR: 1. Matt Hagan; 2. Ron Capps; 3. Bob Tasca III; 4. Terry Haddock; 5. Alexis DeJoria; 6. Tim Wilkerson; 7. Alex Laughlin; 8. Cruz Pedregon; 9. Blake Alexander; 10. J.R. Todd; 11. Robert Hight; 12. Paul Lee; 13. Jason Rupert; 14. John Force; 15. Chad Green; 16. Jeff Arend.

PRO STOCK: 1. Dallas Glenn; 2. Matt Hartford; 3. Camrie Caruso; 4. Aaron Stanfield; 5. Erica Enders; 6. Troy Coughlin Jr.; 7. Fernando Cuadra Jr.; 8. Bo Butner; 9. Kyle Koretsky; 10. Deric Kramer; 11. Mason McGaha; 12. Cristian Cuadra; 13. Greg Anderson; 14. Chris McGaha; 15. Steve Graham; 16. Jerry Tucker.

INDYCAR
PPG 375
At Fort Worth
(All cars Dallara chassis)

1. Josef Newgarden, Chevrolet, 250 laps, running. 2. Pato O'Ward, Chevrolet, 250, running. 3. Alex Palou, Honda, 250, running. 4. David Malukas, Honda, 250, running. 5. Scott Dixon, Honda, 250, running. 6. Scott McLaughlin, Chevrolet, 250, running. 7. Colton Herta, Honda, 250, running. 8. Marcus Ericsson, Honda, 249, running. 9. Callum Ilott, Chevrolet, 249, running. 10. Helio Castroneves, Honda, 249, running.

FORMULA ONE
Australian Grand Prix
At Melbourne Grand Prix Circuit
Track: 3.1 miles

1. Max Verstappen, Netherlands, Red Bull Racing, 58 laps, 2:32.38.371, 25 points. 2. Lewis Hamilton, Britain, Mercedes, 58, +0.179 seconds, 18. 3. Fernando Alonso, Spain, Aston Martin, 58, +0.769, 15. 4. Lance Stroll, Canada, Aston Martin, 58, +3.082, 12. 5. Sergio Perez, Mexico, Red Bull Racing, 58, +3.320, 11. 6. Lando Norris, British Indian Ocean Territory, McLaren, 58, +3.701, 8. 7. Nico Hulkenberg, Germany, Haas, 58, +4.939, 6. 8. Oscar Piastri, Australia, McLaren, 58.

Los Angeles Times

CALENDAR

MONDAY, APRIL 3, 2023 ∷ LATIMES.COM/CALENDAR

AIDAN MONAGHAN Paramount Pictures and eOne

PLAYERS in the new movie include a bard (Chris Pine), a druid (Sophia Lillis, center) and a warrior (Michelle Rodriguez).

A new roll of the dice

'Honor Among Thieves' is the latest attempt at turning 'Dungeons & Dragons' into a hit movie. Here's what's being done differently.

BY BRIAN CONTRERAS

Dungeons & Dragons: Honor Among Thieves" begins with actor Chris Pine begging for a second chance. His character, a lute-playing bard condemned to a tundra prison for "grand larceny and skullduggery," stands before a clemency council, promising his jailers he's reformed.

It might as well be a plea from the D&D franchise itself, which has a legacy of screen adaptations as checkered as the protagonist's past.

The last high-profile stab at turning the popular tabletop role-playing game into a feature film, 2000's New Line Cinema production "Dungeons & Dragons," was savaged by critics and bombed at the box office. Two maligned nontheatrical sequels followed. Before that came a short-lived animated kids' show in the '80s.

"Honor Among Thieves," which opened over the weekend after recently premiering at South by Southwest, is looking to break the franchise's curse.

Co-produced by Paramount Pictures and the Hasbro-owned studio eOne for $150 million, "Honor Among Thieves" is expected to take in more than $30 million from the U.S. and Canada in its opening weekend, according to analysts. That would be a decent start as long as it does well overseas and continues selling tickets in subsequent weeks, helped by its 89% Rotten Tomatoes score.

The film earned a strong $5.6 million from Thursday "preview" screenings, according to studio estimates.

"Nobody had done [D&D] justice yet," writer-director Jonathan Goldstein said at the SXSW premiere. "Now justice has been done."

Getting to this point was its own epic quest. The film's origins stretch back a decade to a legal dispute between Hasbro and a production company over the adaptation rights. Adding to the baggage was Hollywood's poor track record with adapting games of all kinds.

Video game adaptations such as "Super Mario Bros." (1993), "Doom" (2005), "Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time" (2010) and "Warcraft" (2016) all suffered from some mix of critical dismissal, fan rebuke or box-office failure. Board game and toy adaptations have faced similar problems, as with "Battleship" (2012).

"Studios would acquire rights to these properties and not really take enough time to get to understand them or hire the right creative talents with some appreciation of those fan bases and those mythologies," said Shawn Robbins, chief analyst at Boxoffice Pro. "And when you're going up against big expectations like those of these franchises, that makes it even more of an uphill battle."

But the winds have shifted in recent years.

A recent spate of game adaptations including "Detective Pikachu" (2019), "Sonic the Hedgehog" (2020), the "League of Legends" Netflix series "Arcane" (2021) and "Uncharted" (2022) have found commercial success, despite some still getting lukewarm reviews.

The forthcoming "Super Mario Bros. Movie" from Universal Pictures seems poised to keep up the streak. Warner Bros. releases "Barbie," Greta Gerwig and Noah Baumbach's take on the Mattel doll, this summer. In TV, HBO's "The Last of Us" turned an award-winning video game into a prestige drama series.

[See **Game,** E3]

It's one way to keep art in U.K.

Getty, British museum plan to jointly acquire famed 'Mai' portrait, but caveats stand out.

CHRISTOPHER KNIGHT
ART CRITIC

News flashed around the British press and social media late last week of an unusually clever fundraising gambit: the joint acquisition by London's National Portrait Gallery and Los Angeles' J. Paul Getty Museum of a brilliant 18th century portrait by Joshua Reynolds (1723-92).

"Mai is staying! Joshua Reynolds' Portrait of Omai will be acquired and owned jointly by @NPGLondon and @GettyMuseum — just announced," author Lucy Ward, who has been instrumental in efforts to keep the privately owned painting from leaving the United Kingdom, tweeted Friday.

Its owner, Dublin-based businessman John Magnier, offered the work for sale on the open market for a reported 50 million pounds (more than $61 million) almost two years ago, and an export license was immediately deferred to give a U.K. buyer a chance to match the asking price.

"Celebrating that the great Reynolds portrait Omai — Mai as he was actually named — is to stay!" prominent British historian Simon Sebag Montefiore tweeted, correcting the Polynesian sitter's name. (The "o" before "mai" is an introductory word, like "here's" or "I am.")

Another writer exulted, "Excellent news. Following a brilliant campaign" to save the masterpiece for the British public.

"The idea," according to London's Art Newspaper, "is that the Reynolds painting will be on display in London and Los Angeles half the

[See **Painting,** E3]

Piano-playing satirist dies

Mark Russell, who skewered D.C.'s elite with pithy one-liners and upbeat tunes, has died. He was 90. E2

Comics **E4-5**
Puzzles **E4**

BALLET REVIEW

Delicious spectacle makes 'Chocolate' soar

ABT shows the story ballet is bigger than ever with a bedazzling U.S. premiere.

MARK SWED
MUSIC CRITIC

MARTY SOHL American Ballet Theatre

CASSANDRA TRENARY and Herman Cornejo in "Like Water for Chocolate" at Segerstrom Center.

In the aftermath of World War II, story ballet seemed to have little future as a credible art form in which a narrative evening-length ballet could be created to a lasting new score. Prokofiev's "Cinderella," which premiered in November 1945 at the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow, was the last new major story ballet to enter the repertory.

Ambitious attempts in mid-1950s London — notably "Prince of the Pagodas" and "Undine," with exceptional scores by Benjamin Britten and Hans Werner Henze, respectively — "didn't," as the British press sniffed, "quite come off." Instead, the fashion became for new story ballets to be created around old music.

Yet story ballet did, in fact, enjoy an exceptional postwar popularity in the West. "The Nutcracker" was only performed completely in the U.S. on Christmas Eve 1944, by San Francisco Ballet, making it the holiday phenomenon it has become. Meanwhile, choreographers of all stripes have never ceased reimagining the classics, the revivals of which keep many companies alive. As recently as February, the touring French avant-garde Ballet Preljocaj brought its strikingly effective "Swan Lake" to Santa Barbara, updated to evoke a modern environmental catastrophe.

But choreographer Christopher Wheeldon and composer Joby Talbot have been making brand-new, large-scale story ballet once again a popular sensation. Beginning with their hit "Alice's Adventures in Wonderland" by the Royal Ballet in 2011, the team followed up with "The Winter's Tale" three years later. Last June, the Royal Ballet unveiled its latest collaboration: "Like Water for Chocolate," a coproduction with American Ballet Theatre.

Wednesday night, ABT brought the new ballet to Segerstrom Center for its U.S. premiere. In June, it will open ABT's summer season in New York. It is said to be one of the most elaborate productions the 84-year-old company has staged.

The dancing bedazzles.

[See **Ballet,** E6]

'I don't believe in anything but art'

Newly paroled rapper 03 Greedo ponders his future, lost friends, the 'voo' in his music.

BY JEFF WEISS

DALLAS — The sky here is still half-dark when the black Escalade rolls into the gated community to pick up 03 Greedo. It's shortly before 8 a.m. on March 16, the Watts rapper's first full day as a free man, after nearly half a decade in the Texas penitentiary system.

A dozen hours from now, Greedo, who once described his sound as "emo music for gangbangers," will perform at Billboard's party at the South by Southwest festival in Austin, heralding a messianically awaited return.

"The last time I saw you, we was *living*," Greedo, 35, says with a smile, thinking of a different lifetime, as he throws a luxury duffel bag into the trunk.

It was summer 2018, his final week of freedom, a chaotic 12-hour zigzag across L.A that included a shopping spree at the Beverly Center, a recording session at DJ Mustard's studio and a late-night video shoot.

He then disappeared into the barbed-wire labyrinths of a Texas prison to serve a 20-year sentence, part of a plea deal for possession of four pounds of methamphetamine and two stolen pistols, stemming from a stop in 2016 by sheriffs patrolling a federally designated "high-intensity drug-trafficking area."

Despite having been a spectral presence for the last five years, Greedo (born Jason Jamal Jackson) was a spiritual life force of West

[See **03 Greedo,** E6]

April showers readers with 10 literary plums

By Bethanne Patrick

Spring has sprung, along with new books about dreams, nature and beauty, the raw materials of renewal. Whatever the genre that renews your spirits — mystery or history, poetry or prose — you'll find it on our April list. Don Winslow offers the second installment in his "City" trilogy, Sophie Mackintosh examines a historical crime, Nicole Chung's second memoir triumphs over grief, and Simon Winchester takes on nothing less than the human quest for knowledge. All of them involve high stakes: mutiny and trauma, transcendence and growth. The stuff of life. Read up.

FICTION

Cursed Bread

Sophie Mackintosh
Doubleday: 208 pages, $27
Tuesday

Mackintosh's Women's Prize-nominated third novel carries the power of her first two, "The Water Cure" and "Blue Ticket." It's based on a 1951 mass poisoning in Pont-Saint-Esprit, France, that left 50 hospitalized and seven dead, all due to "bad bread." Revenge? Accident? CIA hallucinogens? A feverish friendship between Elodie, the baker's wife, and Violet, the wife of an American ambassador, both complicates and expands reality.

The Haunting of Alejandra

V. Castro
Del Rey: 272 pages, $28
April 18

Alejandra has the perfect life: a husband, three children, a beautiful house in Philadelphia. But she's living in the kind of quiet despair that will sound familiar to those who suffer from depression. When she finds a therapist who is, like her, of Mexican heritage, the women decide that Alejandra is possessed by La Llorona, a mythical spirit also known as "The Crying Woman." As they pursue an exorcism, Castro keeps the suspense at a perfect pace.

The Five Sorrowful Mysteries of Andy Africa

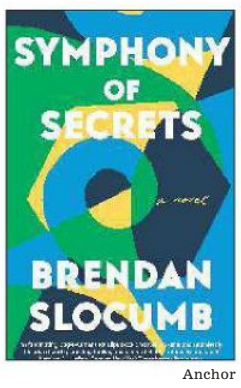
Stephen Buoro
Bloomsbury: 336 pages, $28
April 18

Andy Aziza has growing up to do, and it will involve anger and family secrets and a big first love. So far, so common. But "Andy Africa," as he terms himself, lives in a Nigerian town torn between two faiths (Muslim and Catholic), and he takes on the theological language of the latter to explain his journey, making his eventual affair with a priest's niece (come on, Eileen!) funny and poignant.

Symphony of Secrets

Brendan Slocumb
Anchor: 448 pages, $28
April 18

Slocumb's 2022 book, "The Violin Conspiracy," focused on performance; this follow-up turns on composition, but it's not a one-note theme. When a musicologist named Bern Hendricks receives a call asking if he can re-score famed composer Frederic Delaney's long-lost opera, he agrees. Unfortunately, Hendricks will discover Delaney may not have written it. Did a Black woman named Josephine Reed compose all or part of it? Let's find out.



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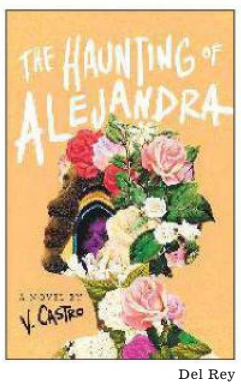
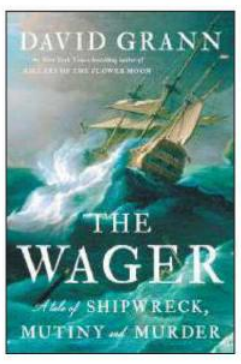


Del Rey



Doubleday

City of Dreams

Don Winslow
William Morrow: 352 pages, $30
April 18

Winslow takes Danny Ryan from 1988 Providence, R.I., to California in a whiplash-paced gangster thriller guaranteed to delight his fans. But caveat, fandom: Even for you, "City of Dreams" will feel as dark as a Moretti brother's heart (yes, Peter and Paulie have roles in the new book). Ryan has plenty to deal with on the Left Coast, but also family obligations, which leave room for a glimmer of hope in the next book.

NONFICTION

A Living Remedy

Nicole Chung
Ecco: 256 pages, $30
Friday

A sophomore memoir might be even tougher to write than a second novel, but Chung ("All You Can Ever Know") has knocked it out of the park with her second book, detailing how she coped with the deaths of her adoptive parents before and during the COVID-19 pandemic. Read both books for a full accounting of how transracial adoption affects a person, but know that "A Living Remedy" stands on its own as an accounting of what it means to become an orphan.

You Could Make This Place Beautiful

A Memoir

Maggie Smith
Atria: 320 pages, $28
April 11

Smith's poetry collection "Keep Moving," a 2020 blockbuster (how often does that word modify "poetry collection"?), informs this memoir about the end of her marriage and its effect on her children. In fact, its title is from the last line of Smith's viral poem "Good Bones" ("Life is short, though I keep this from my children..."). The composition, including very short chapters, authentically conveys Smith's poetic voice.

This Is Not Miami

Fernanda Melchor
New Directions: 160 pages, $16
Tuesday

Melchor, whose novel "Hurricane Season" was nominated for the International Booker and the National Book Award, now writes nonfiction — if reportage blended with authorial imagination fits that category. Melchor sets 10 stories in and around Veracruz, based on real events but without verifiable details: a carnival queen-turned-killer, a purported witch, a meeting with a cartel. The stories are shocking, the prose shockingly good.

The Wager

A Tale of Shipwreck, Mutiny and Murder

David Grann
Doubleday: 352 pages, $30
April 18

The shipwreck: 1740, the Royal Navy ship the Wager, off Brazil. The mutiny: up for debate, between two groups of survivors (no further spoilers). The murder: Suffice it to say a court-martial was assembled. Grann ("Killers of the Flower Moon") employs his considerable narrative gifts in reconstructing an event that not only reveals the weaknesses inherent in military justice but also might help us understand the essence of imperialism.

Knowing What We Know

The Transmission of Knowledge From Ancient Wisdom to Modern Magic

Simon Winchester
Harper: 432 pages, $35
April 25

Winchester has written about information systems before, as in his 1998 book "The Professor and the Madman," about the making of the Oxford English Dictionary. In his robust new compendium, the author examines those systems in far grander scope, from mankind's earliest attempts at language to the digital worlds we now keep in our pockets. This isn't just a rollicking look back; Winchester asks what these systems do to our minds, for good and ill.

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WHAT THE HELL HAPPENED TO BLOOD, SWEAT & TEARS? 1:20 4:20 7:10
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A GOOD PERSON R 1:10 4:10 7:10
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THE LOST KING PG-13 1:20 4:20 7:20
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THE QUIET GIRL PG-13 4:30 PM
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DUNGEONS & DRAGONS: HONOR AMONG THIEVES PG-13 12:50 4:00 7:10
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"EQUAL-OPPORTUNITY OFFENDER"
Mark Russell, with his trademark bow tie and trusty piano, was a fixture in Washington known for making fun of whichever party was in power.

MARK RUSSELL, 1932 – 2023

Satirist showed D.C. how to laugh at itself

In a self-serious town, it was a point of pride for the piano-playing entertainer to make jokes about you.

By Nardine Saad

Longtime political humorist Mark Russell, the wise-cracking piano player who skewered Washington's elite with pithy one-liners and upbeat tunes, has died. He was 90.

The irreverent satirist died Thursday at home in Washington, D.C., of complications from prostate cancer, his wife, Alison Russell, told the Washington Post.

Russell, a master of political satire with a rapier wit, was best known for his "Mark Russell Comedy Specials" that aired on PBS from 1975 to 2004 and for dispensing nonpartisan humor — set to music behind a flag-draped piano.

"I sing songs at the piano and also talk," he told The Times in 1991. "If [people] were just tuning in [to my shows] for the first time and they had no idea who I was, there's a good chance that they would only like half the show, because I'm an equal-opportunity offender."

That equal-opportunity offending was "basically cowardice," the affable comic quipped.

Wearing dark-rimmed glasses and a bow tie, Russell had been a familiar face in the capital since the end of the Eisenhower administration, but he was catapulted to the national stage with his first PBS special in 1975. He also wrote a syndicated newspaper column and considered himself to be "a political cartoonist for the blind."

The bespectacled entertainer grew up in Buffalo, N.Y., in the 1940s and '50s. He drew inspiration from radio comics Jack Benny and the acerbic Fred Allen, but idolized his uncle — a band singer with the staff orchestra on a local radio station and the only person in the family who had been an entertainer.

Russell began taking piano lessons at age 7 and scored his first professional gig at 14, earning $10 playing piano with a bass player and a guitarist at an Italian restaurant on New Year's Eve. "We knew 10 songs and kept playing the same songs over and over," he told The Times in 1991.

He served in the Marines in the early 1950s as a radio operator stationed in Japan and Hawaii. Then he worked briefly in his father's gas station in Virginia, where his family moved shortly after he graduated from high school.

Russell said he had no career goals then, but wanted "to be in entertainment of some kind." He described his musicianship as too much of an embarrassment to be a serious jazz pianist, but said he "put those three chords that I know to pretty good use."

He joked that he became a political satirist because he "was living in Washington and it was just the expedient thing to do."

"If I lived in Detroit, I would talk about the auto business. The politicians were given such great respect everywhere, such reverence, and I came at them from a different perspective," he said in a separate Times interview.

In the late 1950s he was hired to perform in the bar at the Carroll Arms Hotel, which he described as a smoke-filled political hangout on Capitol Hill frequented by senators, congressmen and lobbyists.

"I was hired just as a piano player and whatever else I could do," he said. "I told jokes and did other people's material, but I couldn't get their attention until I started talking about what they did in politics."

He usually acknowledged the heavyweights in attendance, figuring if they showed up they wouldn't mind being made fun of, and eventually being stung by one of his barbs became a badge of honor, with many politicos appropriating his material themselves.

"Washington is a hotbed of joke thievery," Russell told The Times. "My daughter heard some politician make a speech the other day and she said there were three of my lines in it."

He made a career-boosting move to the Shoreham in 1961, which was "the biggest, fanciest hotel in Washington" at the time, and worked as its resident comedian for 20 years. He also appeared on "The Merv Griffin Show," "The Dean Martin Comedy World Series" and in a series of "Match Game" episodes in the 1970s and '80s. By then, he had taken his show on the road, performing at public and corporate events across the nation. He eventually played all 50 states — hitting North Dakota last in 1991 — and wrote funny stories and observations about each one that he compiled into a book.

"Last week I hit my 50th state," he told The Times in 1991. "North Dakota held out for some reason all these years. I kept dropping hints on talk shows and things. I thought maybe nobody invited me because they didn't have public television, but then I thought about it for a while; maybe they *do* have public television."

Russell was hired by and lampooned both Democrats and Republicans, tilting his humor "toward whoever's in power" and supposing that "it will even out on Judgment Day."

"It's strange. It shows I have no scruples. It's what's known as the spineless middle ground," he joked.

In addition to his wife, Russell is survived by three children from his first marriage — Monica Welch, John Russell and Matthew Russell of Tucson — a brother, six grandchildren and two great-grandchildren, according to the Post.

Christopher Ruppel Getty Images

PBS ENTERTAINER
Russell, pictured in 2002, started out in a hotel bar in the 1950s but gained national notoriety on PBS.

Paramount Pictures and eOne

MAKERS of "Dungeons & Dragons: Honor Among Thieves" — with a cast including Daisy Head — hope to finally translate the game to movie success.

Trying to craft a new 'D&D' spell

[**Game,** from E1]

That's a positive trend for Hasbro, for which film and TV adaptations are a way to capitalize on the company's most recognizable brands while also driving sales back to toys and games.

"Everything we're doing, we're trying to fuel play," said Nathan Stewart, the head of franchise at Dungeons & Dragons publisher Wizards of the Coast, a subsidiary of Hasbro. "We make games and we fuel play."

The toy company has long had ambitions of turning its biggest-name properties into larger entertainment franchises, in the vein of Paramount's long-running "Transformers" series, based on the Hasbro toys. Hasbro has become increasingly hands-on with its game and toy adaptations in recent years.

In 2019, Hasbro acquired Entertainment One, or eOne, for about $4 billion to help make it a more serious media-business player. The toy company now is selling off parts of eOne, such as the Showtime series "Yellowjackets." D&D and other Hasbro properties were excluded from the sale.

The new "Dungeons & Dragons" film is part of a larger plan for the brand. A Paramount+ television show is also in the works, which will be an independent story that explores a different part of the D&D world.

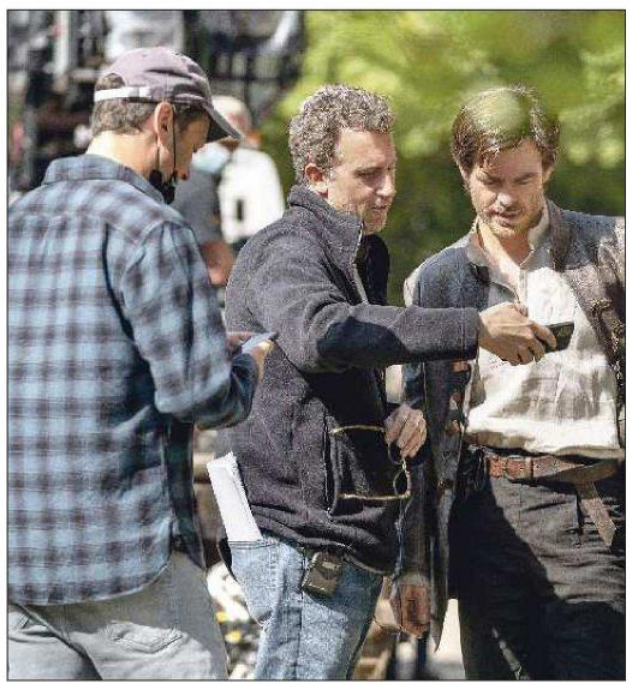
Hasbro's efforts come as studios are scrambling to turn intellectual property — including books, plays, podcasts, Twitter threads, games and toys — into recognizable media properties.

"Brands and games and toys and other known IP are a treasure in brand awareness," said Nick Meyer, president of film at eOne. "They're a treasure, and everyone's on the hunt."

That game adaptations seem to have gotten better in recent years is in part because the upper echelons of the entertainment industry have been taken over by fans, executives said. Properties that were once considered the domain of "nerd culture" are now mainstream.

"These are our favorite things on the planet," said Stewart, who was heavily involved in developing "Honor Among Thieves," down to the spells and insignias seen onscreen. "Now we are in these roles of decision-makers and professionals with some good tenure under our belt, and so we can finally make the project that is so close to our heart."

Yet as central as fans are to both the production process and the intended audience, they're not the whole story.



AIDAN MONAGHAN

DIRECTORS John Francis Daley and Jonathan Goldstein on the movie's set with star Chris Pine.

The "Honor Among Thieves" filmmakers took pains to also make the project accessible to people who've never rolled a 20-sided die. The film includes nods to decades of accumulated lore — a birdlike aarakocra in one scene, an offhand reference to "Baldur's Gate" in another — without distracting from the plot. It's a marked difference from the 2000 flop, which many have criticized for getting too caught up in its own mythos.

"The biggest lesson probably from something like the 2000 movie is: Don't make it just for the fans," said Hasbro Chief Executive Chris Cocks. "Make sure that you tell a story that, even if you've never picked up a dice before or read one of the D&D books, you can relate to."

It helps that the Dungeons & Dragons brand, which originated in the 1970s, is enjoying a pop-culture resurgence. It features prominently in Netflix's '80s nostalgia-fest "Stranger Things," introducing younger audiences to a game their parents might have grown up playing. The game also has become popular among podcasters and livestreamers who use it as a vehicle for improvised storytelling.

'Dungeons & Dragons: Honor Among Thieves'

Rated: PG-13, for fantasy action/violence and some language
Running time: 2 hours, 14 minutes
Playing: In general release

The new movie appears to have further boosted interest in D&D. According to Fandom, a company that hosts wikis for online fan communities, the D&D-focused "Forgotten Realms" wiki has already seen 13% growth in pageviews this year. Pageviews across D&D-related wikis rose 9% after the first official "Honor Among Thieves" trailer dropped.

"Its franchise value extends across a broad range of demographics," Perkins Miller, Fandom's chief executive, said in an email.

It took a long time to make this latest attempt happen. Plans to make a D&D movie at Warner Bros., which had absorbed New Line, were entangled in a lawsuit over who had the rights to adapt the game. After the dispute was resolved in 2015, Warner Bros. moved ahead with its efforts — only to later pull back, paving the way for Hasbro to work on the film that would become "Honor Among Thieves."

Starting around 2017, Hasbro worked with Paramount on an " 'Ocean's 11' meets 'The Lord of the Rings' " heist film that, tonally, would reflect the original game's not-too-serious ethos, Cocks said.

The project would in many ways be a repudiation of prior efforts to adapt D&D for the screen — but that doesn't mean the brand has completely shed its history. The characters of the original '80s kids show make a cameo in "Honor Among Thieves." Could a more sustained revival of that property be on the horizon?

"That was one of my favorites when I was a little kid," Cocks said. "I'd love to see us take another shot at something like that."

Museums' gambit to acquire 'Mai'

[**Painting,** from E1]

time, being moved between the two museums perhaps every five years."

"National Portrait Gallery and Getty to share ownership of Reynolds portrait," headlined the news from the U.K.'s Museums Assn.

And on went the rejoicing — understandably so, given what appears to be a magnificent work of art.

Nearly 8 feet tall, the oil painting depicts a tattooed young Tahitian man in his early 20s who sailed to London with Capt. Cook in 1774. Mai became a sensation in aristocratic British society, feted by King George III.

Reynolds took the celebrity route for his portrait of Mai. He is theatrically dressed in classical Roman robes and a turban, and he's posed before a wholly imagined and idealized South Pacific landscape.

Many scholars hail the work as Reynolds' greatest painting.

Whether that's the case is hard to say, as the picture has been in private hands and rarely shown in public since it was painted almost 250 years ago. (Reynolds was putting brush to canvas just around the time a quill was being put to parchment in Philadelphia to write the Declaration of Independence.) I've never seen it, nor have many other critics and historians.

Simon Schama, the great British historian of European cultural history, had not laid eyes on it either, until a few weeks ago, when the National Portrait Gallery gave him a look.

Schama promptly posted a stirring plea to YouTube to keep the picture in Britain and available to the public.

An acquisition by the National Portrait Gallery, reopening June 22 after a major three-year renovation, would in many ways represent a full-scale coming-out party for a magnificent Grand Manner portrait of a person of color — a rarity in an aristocratic genre so well represented at, for example, the Huntington Library, Art Museum, and Botanical Gardens in San Marino. (Reynolds' "Sarah (Kemble) Siddons as the Tragic Muse," "Portrait of Samuel Johnson, 'Blinking Sam' " and "Diana (Sackville), Viscountess Crosbie" are standouts among a dozen paintings by the artist there.) A portrait of Black writer and composer Ignatius Sancho by Thomas Gainsborough, Reynolds' great rival, painted six years before "Mai," is in the collection of the National Gallery of Canada.

Drowned out in all the hoopla, however, were some rather sobering caveats. The formal press release jointly issued by the National Portrait Gallery and the Getty was careful to note some "ifs."

NPG Director Nicholas Cullinan said the London museum was excited to "hopefully become co-owners" of the masterpiece with the Getty.

The Getty Trust's chief executive, Katherine E. Fleming, said she was happy for the "opportunity to participate" in what would be an innovative arrangement.

British Arts and Heritage Minister Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay expressed delight that the two museums were "closing in on finalizing a deal."

Getty Museum Director Timothy Potts was most direct, noting that the sharing plan would happen only "if the National Portrait Gallery is successful in the final phase of its fundraising campaign."

National Portrait Gallery London

"PORTRAIT OF MAI (OMAI)," in installation view, by Joshua Reynolds, is the subject of a deal between the Getty and the National Portrait Gallery in the U.K.

Will it be?

Plainly, that's what Friday's announcement was designed to push for — it's a last-ditch fundraising pitch.

For such a spectacular acquisition to be formally declared before actually taking place is highly unusual. This ballyhooed announcement seems designed to create such a celebratory mood around a painting little-known to the British public that failing to capture it now would be nothing less than a national scandal.

It's Britain, after all, not the Getty that hasn't been able to muster the necessary funds. U.K. fundraising stalled at under $30 million — less than half the asking price.

The Getty, secure with an $8-billion endowment, offered to share the purchase some months ago, but Britain at first declined, determined to have the picture remain in London full-time. Less than two weeks ago, the deferment on the export license, which had been extended once, was set to expire after a full year. For an apparently unprecedented third time it was extended again, pushed to June 10, just days before the National Portrait Gallery's planned reopening.

News about the prospective joint purchase represents a significant turnaround in that museum's thinking. A yawning gap of more than $30 million in the fundraising goal has been slashed to a considerably more manageable figure of about $1.2 million. Partial ownership is now preferable to no ownership at all, especially for a painting that instantly becomes the most important in the entire museum collection.

Of course, without the export license deferral, the Getty might have been the museum to hold the masterpiece full-time, negotiating acquisition at the steep asking price. It would have been illuminating, especially under the big-money circumstances, to see it hanging in Brentwood with the three-quarter-length Gainsborough "Portrait of James Christie," founder of the London auction house that still bears his name.

Britain's protectionist art-export laws have been a problem for years, and the apparently unprecedented extensions to snag the Reynolds show how tattered the system has become.

Now that the art market resides in the stratosphere, while cash-strapped Britain struggles, it will only worsen. Once Reynolds' "Mai" has been secured, that's a problem that officials desperately need to address.

COMICS

SUDOKU

1		2	6		8	4		3
				4			1	
			1			7		
		9						
	7	6		1		8	5	
						1		
		1			2			
	6			9				
9		3	4		1	6		2

Level: Gentle

6			3		
			1		6
1					
		2			1
3		4			
		6			2

Level: Gentle

9	1	7	2	3	5	6	8	4
4	5	2	9	6	8	1	7	3
3	6	8	1	4	7	5	2	9
7	8	6	4	9	3	2	1	5
2	3	4	8	5	1	9	6	7
5	9	1	7	2	6	3	4	8
1	2	9	5	8	4	7	3	6
8	7	3	6	1	9	4	5	2
6	4	5	3	7	2	8	9	1

6	2	3	1	4	5
1	5	4	6	2	3
5	3	2	4	1	6
4	1	6	3	5	2
3	4	5	2	6	1
2	6	1	5	3	4

4/3/23

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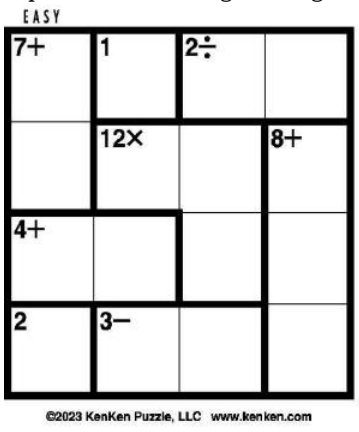
Solutions to Sunday's puzzles

Complete the grid so each row, column and 3-by-3 or 2-by-3 box contains every digit from 1 to 9 (or 1 to 6 for the smaller grid). For strategies on how to solve Sudoku, visit *www.sudoku.org.uk*.

KENKEN

Every box will contain a number; numbers depend on the size of the grid. For a 6x6 puzzle, use Nos. 1-6. Do not repeat a number in any row or column. The numbers in each heavily outlined set of squares must combine to produce the target number found in the top left corner of the cage using the mathematical operation indicated. A number can be repeated within a cage as long as it is not in the same row or column.

EASY



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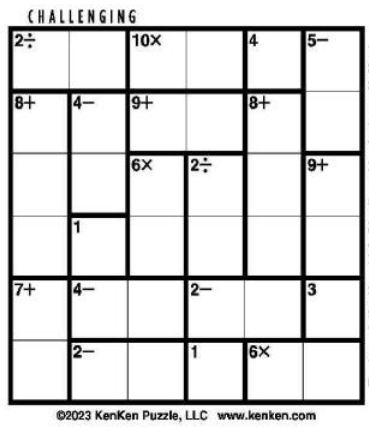
CHALLENGING



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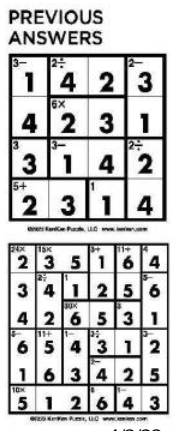
PREVIOUS ANSWERS



4/3/23

HOROSCOPE

By Holiday Mathis

Aries (March 21-April 19): You've already thought enough about the problem. Interrupt this spiral to nowhere by reconnecting with your body.

Taurus (April 20-May 20): The fear of success is not a fear of getting your desire but a fear of the pressures that will come along with it.

Gemini (May 21-June 21): The world won't exactly sync to your timing, but today it will be easier to follow a rhythm than to set one.

Cancer (June 22-July 22): Approval is a weird thing. Sometimes it's given when you don't need it. Don't read too much into that. People approve or don't for their own reasons.

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22): You won't have to address, forgive or avenge the bad behavior of others. All you need to do is ignore it.

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Take everything a little slower than you need to. Pause to get the response. Listening well requires you to leave plenty of space before and after what you say.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23): You leave the comfort of knowing things, and all is revealed in the thing right before you.

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 21): It's only after the struggle, the sacrifice and the investment of time, money and energy that you'll see results.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Let go of pride or the need to put on a front. The truth of the matter is, you've lost something. Hearts will communicate quietly through this shared sense of loss.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): The opportunity for personal growth is abundant when you go toward what you're afraid of.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Your experience of events will be different from another person's, and both are valid.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20): Every solution creates new problems, so don't be in too much of a rush to fix things. There's something about this scene you'll miss one day.

Today's birthday (April 3): Welcome to your year of improved leisure. Life will often bring you your favorite company, mood and activities. Because you pride yourself in working hard and getting results, you'll need to adjust to the gorgeous, relaxed vibe that sets in. More highlights: Developments at work have you helming a key project. You'll be strengthened by different kinds of exercise. A cash win delights! Virgo and Scorpio adore you. Your lucky numbers: 12, 2, 25, 30 and 16.

Mathis writes her column for Creators Syndicate Inc. The horoscope should be read for entertainment.

CROSSWORD

Edited By Patti Varol and Joyce Nichols Lewis

By Dan Caprera

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ACROSS

1 Abrasion a tot may call an "owie"
7 __-mo: instant replay technique
10 Cauldron
13 Wobble
14 Stretch across
15 Wedding promise
16 *Vigorous effort
18 Dairy farm animal
19 Future prunes, perhaps
20 R&B singer Redding
21 "And __ off!"
22 Spanish "Yes, yes!"
23 *"Last Week Tonight" host
25 Treble __: music symbol
27 Exceedingly dry
28 Fan's "I want my money back!"
31 Use Grubhub, say
34 Curt
37 Gallop
38 *Winter transports with treads
40 "__ it ain't so!"
41 Mermaid whose father is King Triton
43 Soda brand in blue cans
44 Chopping tool
45 Do as one's asked
47 Philosopher Immanuel
49 *Come out on top, but just barely
53 Carmine and ruby
57 Comes to a close
58 Piggy bank addition
59 Confusion
60 Hullabaloo
61 Dazzling theater performance, and what the answer to each starred clue literally has
63 Cup edge
64 James of jazz
65 "Gotta hurry!"
66 Observe
67 Donkey
68 Dangerous African fly

DOWN

1 Units tracked by fitness trackers
2 Large stringed instruments in an orchestra
3 Picture puzzle
4 Decidedly tiny
5 Church benches
6 Indoor rower, for short
7 Barcelona's country
8 Rodeo ropes
9 Dollar
10 The other way around
11 Love to pieces
12 Pisa landmark
14 "Jokes __ Can't Tell": late-night segment
17 Locale of many a swanky bar
21 Cable
23 The Fugees rapper Wyclef __
24 Admits
26 TV journalist Stahl
28 Wardrobe item with a clasp
29 Belonging to us
30 Russian Orthodox church feature
32 Rink surface
33 Some lap coverers
35 Kenny G's horn
36 Observe
39 Old Russian ruler
42 Subsides
46 Luxury vessels
48 __ sec: orange-flavored liqueur
49 Puts on
50 Many a low-budget flick
51 Owl sounds
52 Audio brand
54 American living abroad, for short
55 Tunes two croon
56 Shopping binge
59 May honorees
61 Salty expanse
62 __ for tat

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

C	L	A	D		R	E	B	A	G		G	A	S	H
A	O	N	E		A	N	I	S	E		E	K	E	D
S	T	I	C	K	T	O	T	H	E	P	O	I	N	T
A	R	M	O	R			M	A	Z	E	L	T	O	V
		E	D	I	T	W	A	R		R	O	A	R	S
F	R	E	E	S	H	I	P	P	I	N	G			
R	A	Y	S		W	E	S		T	O	Y	C	A	R
A	V	E		B	A	N		L	I	D		O	H	O
Y	E	S	S	I	R		H	E	S		M	B	A	S
			N	O	T	T	O	O	S	H	A	B	B	Y
M	A	T	I	N		R	U	N	O	U	T	S		
E	D	I	F	I	C	E	S			L	I	A	R	S
W	H	A	T	C	H	A	M	A	C	A	L	L	I	T
L	O	N	E		A	T	A	R	I		D	A	T	E
S	C	A	R		S	Y	N	C	S		A	D	A	M

4/3/23

BRIDGE

By Frank Stewart

The blame game began in Eden: Adam blamed Eve, she blamed the serpent, and he had not a leg to stand on. Even today, some people won't take the blame for a foul-up until they exhaust every other possibility.

Today's West led the 10 of hearts against 3NT, and dummy won and led the queen of diamonds. When East took the king, he returned ... a heart. West won the next diamond and led a third heart, but South won and ran the diamonds. East was stuck for discards, and South wound up with 11 tricks. "I expected your hearts to be Q-10-9-x-x," East told his partner.

It's not whether you win or lose but how you place the blame. East had a sure thing by leading the deuce of spades at Trick Three. When West took the ace of diamonds, he could lead another spade, and East would get three spade tricks.

As for East's don't-blame-me comment, once West showed the ace of diamonds, he could hardly hold another queen. Then South would have at most five points for his 1NT bid.

You hold: ♠ A Q 9 2 ♥ 7 5 2 ♦ K ♣ Q 9 7 3 2. The dealer, at your left, opens one heart. Your partner doubles, and the next player raises to two hearts. What do you say?

Answer: Your partner has opening values or more with support for the unbid suits, especially spades. (He may have a powerful hand with a suit he intends to bid; that seems unlikely here.) Your hand is too promising for an invitational jump to three spades. Cue-bid three hearts.

North dealer
N-S vulnerable

NORTH
♠ K J 10
♥ A K
♦ Q J 10 9 4 3
♣ A 8

WEST
♠ 8 5 3
♥ 10 9 8 4 3
♦ A 8 7
♣ 10 6

EAST
♠ A Q 9 2
♥ 7 5 2
♦ K
♣ Q 9 7 3 2

SOUTH
♠ 7 6 4
♥ Q J 6
♦ 6 5 2
♣ K J 5 4

NORTH	EAST	SOUTH	WEST
1 ♦	Pass	1 NT	Pass
3 NT	All Pass		

Opening lead – ♥ 10

Tribune Content Agency

ASK AMY

Not a true-blue partner

Dear Amy: My partner (we live together) owns a vacation home in the Southwest. Months ago, he made plans to take three of his teenage grandchildren there over spring break.

After that plan was hatched, I was diagnosed with cancer and am undergoing chemotherapy.

I had hoped that he would cancel his plans so he could be at our home to help me out, but he made airline reservations after he knew the dates of his vacation would coincide with my treatment.

I am feeling hurt, rejected and unimportant to him, in addition to feeling the ill effects of my treatment. My daughter, who has a full-time job, stepped in.

He rarely sees these grandchildren, who live within 15 minutes of us. Why couldn't he have scheduled a few spring break outings at home instead of traveling during this crucial time?

Sad and Suffering

Dear Sad: My mother once said to me, "Remember: People do what they want to do." When pondering disappointing choices people make that let you down, I think it helps to accept this simple truism.

On the face of it, your partner doesn't seem to have placed a high priority on being your stalwart helpmate.

One of the joys of being a good grandparent is to spend "quality time" with your grandchildren, indulging them with special experiences. More important, however, are the lasting lessons grandparents can impart about stepping up, stepping in and demonstrating your commitment to those who need you.

Factors that you don't mention could be related to how and why you two chose each other in the first place, such as whether he went through a divorce that has made him feel insecure and guilty toward his children and grandchildren.

Regardless, it looks like you are not spending your life with an "in sickness and in health" person.

I hope you've chosen to talk to him about this, honestly expressing how this episode has made you feel.

Dear Amy: I recently got a new job that I've been at for two months. Even though I just started and am still in my 90-day trial period, I feel like this job isn't the right fit for me.

I've been in the medical field for six years and within those years, I've been in and out of medical offices, either quitting or getting fired.

My question is, how do I stay at one job when I really don't like their values? (My manager declined to let me attend an appointment with my son's school because I'm still under my 90-day review.)

I've been looking for other employment, but I feel like it's going to be a never-ending cycle of leaving and being burnt out.

Burnt-out Mom

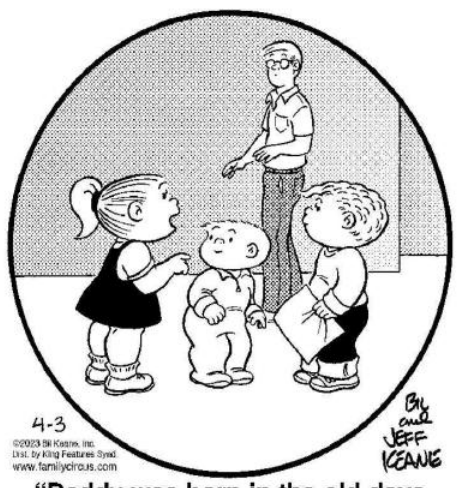
Dear Burnt Out: I agree that you are trapped in a never-ending cycle of working in medical offices and then either quitting or being fired.

By this point, you've racked up an extremely poor work history, which I assume would negatively affect your ability to get another job at a quality medical practice.

You should be pursuing employment in another field. You might receive some much-needed inspiration from reading "The Restart Roadmap: Rewire and Reset Your Career," by "Trading Secrets" podcaster Jason Tartick.

Email questions to Amy Dickinson at *askamy@amydickinson.com*.

FAMILY CIRCUS By Bil Keane

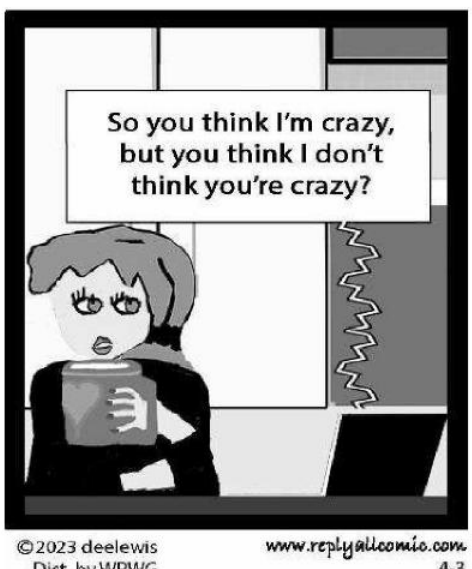


"Daddy was born in the old days and PJ was born in the new days."

DENNIS THE MENACE By Hank Ketcham

"I SLEPT ON MY NECK FUNNY LAST NIGHT." "MAYBE YOU SHOULD JUST STICK TO SLEEPING ON IT SERIOUSLY."

REPLY ALL LITE By Donna Lewis



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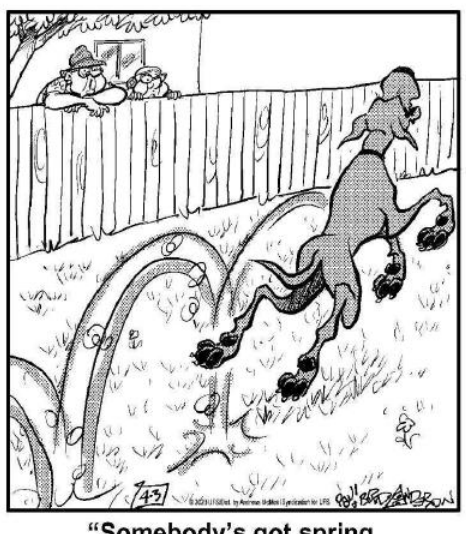
MARMADUKE By Brad & Paul Anderson



"Somebody's got spring fever ... really bad."

BLISS By Harry Bliss

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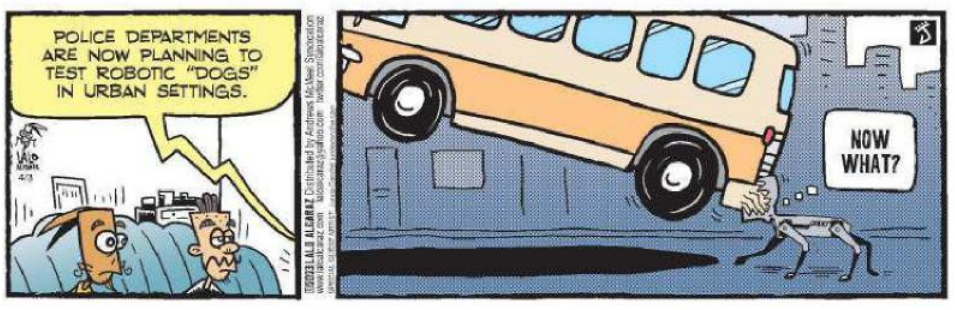
SPEED BUMP By Dave Coverly

COMICS

LA CUCARACHA By Lalo Alcaraz



PICKLES By Brian Crane

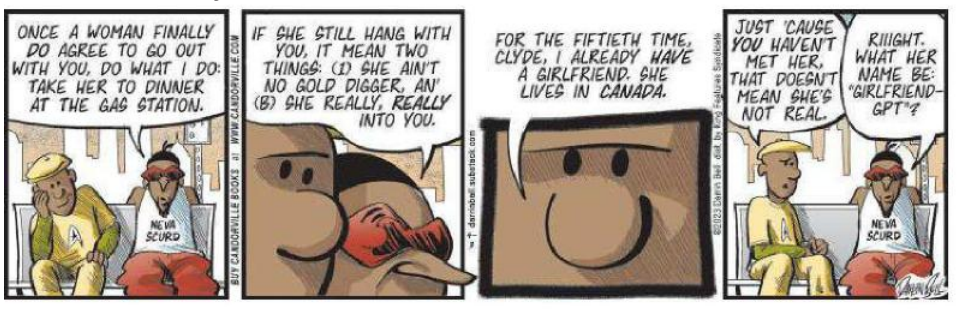
IT'S A NICE DAY FOR A WALK IN THE PARK.
OUT IN THE FRESH AIR AND SUNSHINE...
IT'S GOOD TO GET AWAY FROM IT ALL, ISN'T IT, BOY?
CONTINUED...
DON'T MIND IF I DO.

CRABGRASS By Tauhid Bondia

BABY BLUES By Jerry Scott & Rick Kirkman

HAMMIE JUST SPILLED GRAPE JUICE ON THE CARPET!
OH, GREAT.
OKAY, WHERE IS IT?
RIGHT THERE.
OR THERE... THE OTHER STAINS ARE HIDING IT.
FEEL FOR THE SQUISHY SPOT.

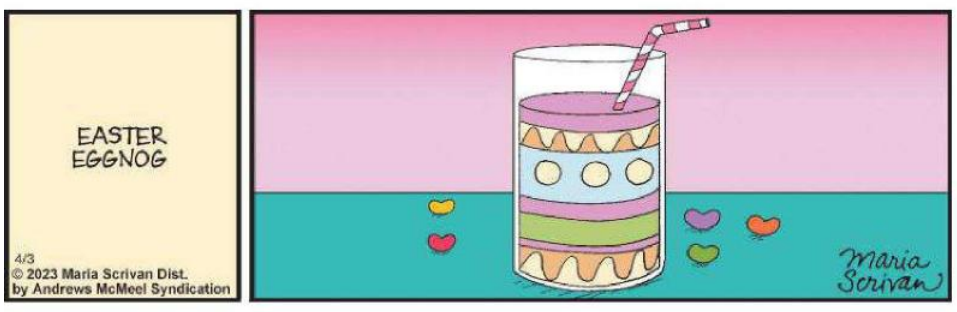
CANDORVILLE By Darrin Bell


ONCE A WOMAN FINALLY DO AGREE TO GO OUT WITH YOU, DO WHAT I DO: TAKE HER TO DINNER AT THE GAS STATION.
NEVA SCURD
IF SHE STILL HANG WITH YOU, IT MEAN TWO THINGS: (1) SHE AIN'T NO GOLD DIGGER, AN' (B) SHE REALLY, REALLY INTO YOU.
FOR THE FIFTIETH TIME, CLYDE, I ALREADY HAVE A GIRLFRIEND. SHE LIVES IN CANADA.
JUST 'CAUSE YOU HAVEN'T MET HER, THAT DOESN'T MEAN SHE'S NOT REAL.
RIIIGHT. WHAT HER NAME BE: "GIRLFRIEND-GPT"?
NEVA SCURD

CRANKSHAFT By Tom Batiuk & Chuck Ayers

I MISSED BEING ABLE TO GET TOGETHER LIKE THIS BACK DURING THE LOCKDOWN.
YEAH... IT WASN'T THE SAME.
HAS ANYONE HAD THEIR COFFEE REFILLED YET?
BATIUK & DAVIS tombatiuk.com/books

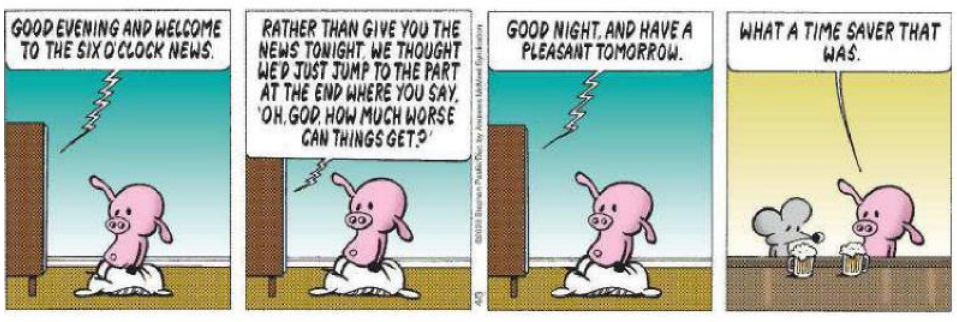
HALF FULL By Maria Scrivan



JUMP START By Robb Armstrong

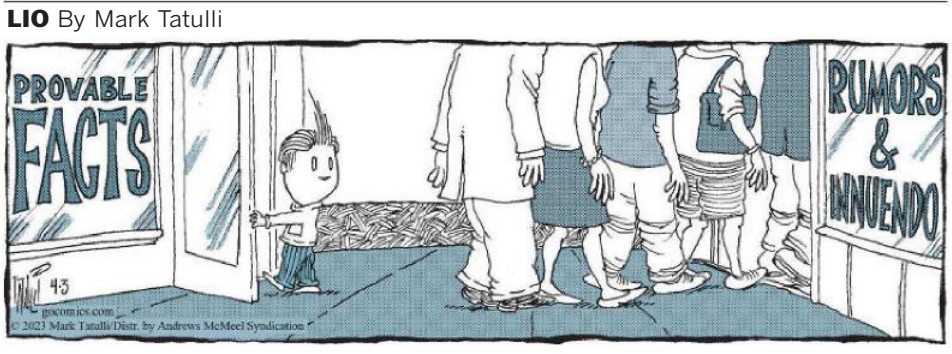
SORRY, MARCUS. I CAN'T ACCEPT THE JOB OFFER.
YOU'RE THE BEST EQUIPMENT MANAGER IN THE NFL!
BUT MY WIFE IS AN OWNER. SHE THINKS IT'S NEPOTISM.
I'LL REMIND DANA THAT FIVE OF THE SIX OWNERS ARE BROTHERS!

PEARLS BEFORE SWINE By Stephan Pastis


GOOD EVENING AND WELCOME TO THE SIX O'CLOCK NEWS.
RATHER THAN GIVE YOU THE NEWS TONIGHT, WE THOUGHT WE'D JUST JUMP TO THE PART AT THE END WHERE YOU SAY, 'OH, GOD, HOW MUCH WORSE CAN THINGS GET?'
GOOD NIGHT, AND HAVE A PLEASANT TOMORROW.
WHAT A TIME SAVER THAT WAS.

MACANUDO By Liniers

LIO By Mark Tatulli



BLONDIE By Dean Young & John Marshall

I'M KIND OF HUNGRY
WHY DON'T YOU MICROWAVE THE LEFTOVER SPAGHETTI?
GREAT IDEA, HONEY!
THERE'S GOT TO BE A QUICKER WAY TO HEAT UP A PLATE OF SPAGHETTI
www.Blondie.com

ZITS By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman

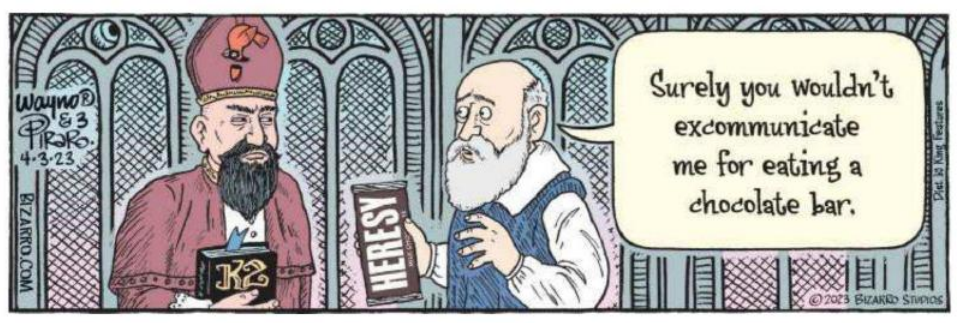
YELLLLO!
WHAT CAN I DO YOU FOR?
HAIRCUT? NO, I JUST GOT MY EARS LOWERED!
MY FATHER IS A FULL-ON DAD MEME.
THERE'S A LOT OF THAT GOING AROUND.

BETWEEN FRIENDS By Sandra Bell-Lundy

THE COMPANY WANTS YOU TO MOVE TO PARIS ...FOR SIX MONTHS?
MAYBE... BENOIT WANTED TO KNOW HOW I FELT ABOUT THE IDEA BEFORE HE PROPOSED IT
I SEE... SO - ARE YOU TELLING ME TO DISCUSS IT? -
-OR ARE YOU TELLING ME - PERIOD?

TUNDRA By Chad Carpenter

BIZARRO By Wayno and Piraro

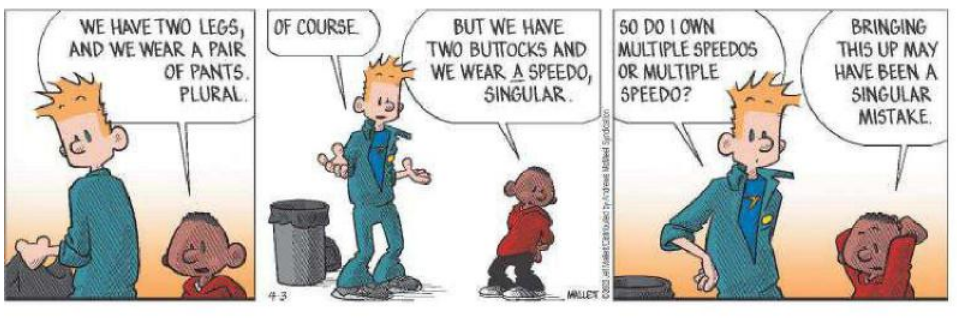


SIX CHIX By Isabella Bannerman

DRABBLE By Kevin Fagan

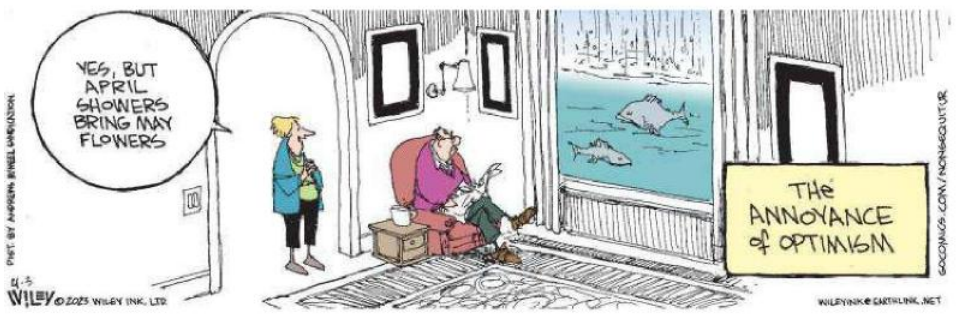
HOW WAS THE COLE PORTER CONCERT?
WELL, YOUR MOM WANTED TO HEAR HER FAVORITE SONG...
BUT WE CAME IN LATE, AND THEY HAD ALREADY STARTED PLAYING IT, SO...
SHE ASKED THE CONDUCTOR TO BEGIN "BEGIN THE BEGUINE" AGAIN!
WHY ARE YOU TALKING LIKE PORKY PIG?

FRAZZ By Jef Mallett


WE HAVE TWO LEGS, AND WE WEAR A PAIR OF PANTS. PLURAL.
OF COURSE.
BUT WE HAVE TWO BUTTOCKS AND WE WEAR A SPEEDO, SINGULAR.
SO DO I OWN MULTIPLE SPEEDOS OR MULTIPLE SPEEDO?
BRINGING THIS UP MAY HAVE BEEN A SINGULAR MISTAKE.

MUTTS By Patrick McDonnell

NON SEQUITUR By Wiley



PEANUTS By Charles M. Schulz

A free 03 Greedo ponders future

[**03 Greedo,** from E1]
Coast hip-hop, a genre-expanding influence on a younger generation, the chest-cavity splitting soul of the streets, a returning hero for a region haunted by tragedy.

Last year alone, two singles — "Trap House" (featuring Shoreline Mafia) and "Substance" — were certified platinum, even though promotion was impossible from prison. A slowed-down version of the latter became a TikTok sensation in 2021, more than three years after its initial release, eclipsing 200 million Spotify streams.

"I've never even seen a TikTok," Greedo shrugs, a reminder of the cultural shifts that have occurred since he left. "I'm bigger than the industry even knows. They don't understand, because I'm huge in the places that most people don't go."

There is something almost ghostly about seeing him in the flesh. An imposing beard sprouts from his face like a Holy Land mufti. He's wearing a Louis Vuitton puffer jacket, black Amiri pants and a gray beanie that covers up what were his trademark locs. The "Living Legend" ink on his face has grown fainter, but the phrase seems even more prophetic.

Re-entrance to the outside world came suddenly. For the last couple of years, the former resident of Watts' Jordan Downs projects had retained a parole lawyer to petition for his early release. But until his mother broke the news to him during a mid-January phone call, he had no clue about his impending freedom.

"You just sit and wait," he says. "You only know when you're up for review. I was expecting the worst. I'd already been denied parole a few times."

In the month and a half since he left prison in northern Texas, Greedo has spent almost every night in a Houston studio. During marathon sessions, he recorded 270 songs in 45 days, returning to a nearby halfway house only in the bleary, predawn hours. Until recently, it remained unclear whether his parole officer would even allow him to leave Houston.

"They're so disorganized and restrictive in Texas. I don't even want to speak on it," he sighs.

For the time being, his probationary terms bar him from leaving the Lone Star State. Hence, the temporary residence in Dallas. There's another hearing in a month, but as long as he has studio access and the ability to watch his daughter graduate high school in June, everything else seems inconsequential.

"I don't care about regular life. I don't believe in anything but art," Greedo stresses, his eyes masked by opaque designer shades.

The SUV begins the 200-mile trek to Austin, past rain-slicked pastures and the infinite sprawl of Whataburger restaurants, gas stations and motels.

"If it ain't fashion or music, I can't express how much ... I don't care. I don't care who's getting married. I don't care who dies anymore. I'm numb to all that."

Prison is a topic he'd rather not discuss. Whatever memories exist are actively trying to be expunged.

"I've been in jail my entire life," he says, absorbing the scenery out the window. "None of my enemies are out here in Texas. Jail is fun. Jail is free room and board."

The hardest deprivation was going without music. For the first two years, his only way to listen to anything was to have someone play it over the phone. In the latter half of his time in prison, he had access to a tablet, but he laments never having heard his last four projects on a proper system — all recorded before he went in but assembled and released from prison.

"There's something really psychological to how they do it out here," he admits. "They try to drone you out."

The Wolf of Grape Street (a nickname derived from the road that runs through Jordan Downs) moves with lupine intensity and swiftness. He's up early, his words heavy with existential gravity, a Terminator on a mission.

If before he was sprawling, admittedly on a "little bit of everything," he is now sober and focused, like a pro gambler silently registering every movement. He's still fearless, but taking risks only after a shrewd calculation. His driver points out a Starbucks to stop at, but Greedo tells him it needs to be a drive-thru.

After all, a brand-new and blinding $200,000 drum chain dangles from his neck, molded after his Drummer Gang crew.

"I went in for 2 kilos and now I got 2 kilos of rose gold and 7,000 diamonds on me," he laughs, running his fingers over the gems. "Emerald cuts, baguettes, big diamonds in this bitch."

The caution underscores the nature of being a rap star today.

Over the last five years, Greedo has been unable to attend the funerals of several of his closest peers. First, there was Nipsey Hussle, who taught him how to "dance around the industry issues and get around the politics of being a superstar." Then Memphis, Tenn., rapper Young Dolph, an older-brother figure who took Greedo on an early tour. One of Greedo's first prominent outside features came from PnB Rock, shot last year during an attempt to rob him of his jewelry outside a Roscoe's House of Chicken 'N Waffles in South L.A.

Photographs by JUSTIN STAPLE

IN THE TIME since leaving prison, 03 Greedo has spent almost every night in a Houston studio.

Most scarring was the death of his "evil twin," Drakeo the Ruler, who was stabbed in late 2021 at a festival in L.A. Even though they were simultaneously free for only one month in December 2017, they forged a profound musical connection and friendship that made them their generation's Tupac Shakur and Snoop Dogg, or at least the West Coast's answer to Gucci Mane and Young Thug.

"I shed tears not just because of losing Drakeo as a friend but also because of what could have been," Greedo says. "He was my favorite person that I've ever recorded with. Our jail calls were hilarious."

He's unsure whether it's because of age or sobriety, but his dreams are increasingly vivid.

"I'll be chilling with Drakeo a lot — not like he's giving me no message or anything, but we'll just be going on and living our lives," Greedo says, his gaze fixed on the gray interstate blur. "But I be trying not to keep talking about Drakeo because I don't want to start crying."

The car goes silent. The subject is quickly switched.

"How does it feel to be out?" I ask.

"I'm still not really even out yet. I just passed some s— called Waxahachie," Greedo says, as the car drives past the Texas town, its name painted on a water tower.

"One thing I used to love about drug trafficking is you get to see, 'Damn, this is what this side of the world looks like, this is what *this* city looks like,' " Greedo says wistfully. "I remember I was counting down how many of the 50 states I had been to just off of drug trafficking. I got up to like 30, something high. All you gotta do is get in your car and go, even if you not drug trafficking."

The observation is classic Greedo: unfiltered, nomadic, oddly romantic. His artistry lies partly in his gift to reconcile what wrongly seem like contradictions. He's spent much of his adult life behind bars but waxes nostalgic about being a teenager in the Jordan Downs projects, discovering art films and Takashi Murakami. He can flip a Lana Del Rey sample and Rick James into a filthy sex anthem ("Freak").

He embodies the aspirations of his section but spent significant time in St. Louis, Sacramento and Atlanta, allowing him to bridge Southern bounce and eccentric auto-tune blues with something hyper-local. His first viral breakout, "Mafia Business," was a slang-filled requiem performed at the funeral for a Watts OG.

"Greedo can see all the way to the end zone of the football field before the game has even started," sums up his frequent collaborator, Kenny Beats, who produced "Netflix and Deal," one of the projects Greedo dropped from prison.

"He's the representation of true artistic freedom in a place where if you aren't doing the traditional California sound, you're not supposed to be able to make your own lane and have this legendary trajectory. Greedo's always been an original, putting his heart on his sleeve, where others are scared to be themselves. Now, he's come back from insurmountable obstacles and able to tell an extremely important story that a lot of people don't get to tell."

To outsiders, it seemed like Greedo appeared out of nowhere in 2018. But under previous name Greedy Giddy, he'd spent most of the decade building a buzz in Watts, Compton and Gardena. But whenever stardom beckoned, the carceral system ensnared him.

It changed with 2016's "Sweet Lady," a weirdly tender but X-rated Valentine, now approaching 20 million streams on Spotify. For the first time, he was able to stay free long enough to capitalize on the groundswell of attention. And like many of Greedo's hits, it was a slow burn, taking years to fully seep into the collective unconscious.

"That's why I call it creep music," he quips. "Because it creeps up on you."

His classic trio of "Purple Summer" mixtapes — almost entirely self-produced — made him a California phenomenon, leading to a seven-figure deal with Alamo Records.

For the first half of 2018, he was on the short list of hottest rappers alive: collaborating with Lil Uzi Vert, getting played in a Kendall Jenner Instagram story, being acknowledged by Drake as a major inspiration.

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>
> — 03 GREEDO

Within Los Angeles, Greedo catalyzed a movement. His collaborations with Drakeo and Shoreline Mafia ushered in a new wave that upended conventional expectations of what local hip-hop could look and sound like.

Instead of khakis and low-riders, they wore high fashion and crashed expensive foreign cars. Greedo unleashed a trauma-wracked croak over sun-damaged samples, like an alien crash-landing a spaceship atop the Watts Towers, drunk off lean. A song exists for every mood: sexual conquests to solitary-confinement nightmare, drug ballads to disco-ball bacchanalia. Or, as he called it, "pain music that's popping."

"When we think about Ice Cube saying, 'I started this gangsta' s—,' that's how Greedo is to this era of L.A. hip-hop. He's the last pioneer left of this new age," says Victor "Rosecrans Vic" Ulloa, co-host of Power 106's "Brown Bag Morning Show."

"He made everyone want to sing and experiment. He proudly said he was from the projects where it's grimy and dirty, but we're also clean. I do a lot of drugs but that's just me ... a rock star, a living legend. His return gives people hope that there's some order restored in the universe — like nature is healing."

There is a sense of unfinished business. A month after Greedo released his official major-label album debut, "God Level," in 2018, the legal turmoil from his 2016 drug arrest exiled him to Texas. During his last month of freedom, he played multiple sold-out farewell shows where fans grieved. During his five years locked up, his folk-hero stature only solidified.

Halfway to Austin, Greedo realizes that he's left his silver Off-White jacket back in Dallas. ("I'm gonna look like a gas station hot dog in the foil," he jokes about his performance outfit.) Someone is immediately conscripted to pick it up. His mind moves in a dozen directions. He dials his management team to give advice on how to best clear a Busta Rhymes sample for a song from his next project.

His first album release since he got out, the 33-song "Halfway There," dropped March 24 and proves that he hasn't lost his gift for creating bloodletting emotional odysseys. Eager to dispel comment-section critics who overlooked his sheer rapping ability, he also has doubled down on the ferocity of his vocal attack. If his pre-prison projects were almost entirely freestyled, these songs are more tightly written, honoring the fallen, indicting the double-talk of the industry, powered by the energy of a bowstring being pulled back for half a decade.

"They should have never said I wasn't lyrical," he says solemnly.

For all the focus on the extra-musical aspects of his career, Greedo remains tapped into the spiritual side that feeds the art. If prison made him more disciplined, he understands that what elevated him was something intangible and otherworldly.

"Sometimes people will be spooked and think I'm on some demonic s—. The 'voo,' man, I always talk about the 'voo,' " Greedo says, alluding to the genesis of his creativity. "There's something spiritual in what I do. It's something I can't explain. Even if I do a song where I'm straight rapping, there are things that I do in the background of the beat where I pour my soul onto it. Some people try to imitate that, which is flattering, but I know that the 'voo' ain't in them."

As the car sweeps across the countryside, Greedo looks over his set list again. He's slightly worried that he won't be able to remember all the lyrics, but when he performs before thousands at Waterloo Park in Austin later that evening, the show goes off flawlessly.

The songs have become even more poignant during the span between their creation and his release from prison. When he warbles the hook of "Never Bend," it still feels like a spiritual for the dispossessed, but now, he has become something bigger — a symbol offering testament to the strength and resiliency of the human spirit.

I'm thanking God, could have died in the pen
You haven't been 'gainst the odds like I been
You haven't been where I been, I never fold, never bend

As for the future, there are plans to enter fashion, direct his own videos and create his own 03 Greedo multiverse. The only focus will be the art, whether that means his outfits, his melodies or how his albums are tracked. If possible, he wants to live outside the country. Maybe Spain or Italy, somewhere where the pace is slower and he won't be shadowed by vultures seeking favors.

"Nobody ever really knows the true me. You have to keep some of your real self in reserve," he says slyly. "I'm trying to get me a nice-ass house in the country, chill with my grandma and my daughter, have my mom in a house close by. I want to be barefoot in that bitch, just be smoking that weed, watching some old movies where you can really think."

Greedo says this with an exhale of relief but an understanding of the next steps required. In the moment, he instructs the driver to give him the aux cord. He wants to enjoy his new music loud, eyes closed, content but never satisfied, as the speeding car creeps closer to its final destination.

THE RAPPER greets fans during a performance at a Billboard showcase at the South by Southwest festival in Austin, Texas.

The story ballet at its most delicious

[**Ballet,** from E1]
The choreography is full of spectacle, and the production is effects-rich. The familiar narrative from Mexican novelist Laura Esquivel's 1989 bestseller and the 1992 film serves up sentiment without embarrassment. Talbot's orchestral score tells you how to feel and suggests movement possibilities for the dancers. The sheer scale of theatrical engineering is astonishing.

Everything works as intended. And it should work, given that Wheeldon and Talbot rely more on expertise than novelty. There is little, if anything, outside of the technical virtuosity on display that feels new to either Esquivel or dance. But that is not the point.

Wheeldon and Talbot take considerable pains to get the milieu of the novel right. ABT introduced the performance Wednesday with a brief promo film featuring Esquivel and Mexican conductor and musical consultant Alondra de la Parra extolling the project. Mexican architect Luis Barragán is the inspiration for Bob Crowley's impeccable decor. (Sets based on the work of artists seems to be in vogue, including the sets influenced by Danish artist Vilhelm Hammershøi that grace L.A. Opera's current "Pelléas et Mélisande.")

Talbot's score features elements of traditional Mexican dance and song, as does Wheeldon's choreography, gloriously so in big numbers. The guitar and ocarina join the orchestra — the Pacific Symphony, conducted by David LaMarche, replacing De la Parra, who couldn't travel because of an ear infection. But for all the efforts at authenticity, this is little more than the fact that ballet loves locale. Talbot's score, which goes in for Hollywood-style climaxes, sounds more like a generic film or Broadway score.

Wheeldon's attempts to translate the essence of Mexican cooking into dance is far more interesting. Esquivel introduces each chapter of her novel, set in the early 20th century, with a recipe. Tita, its protagonist, is forced to devote her life to tending her domineering mother, Elena, the role expected of the youngest daughter. Frustrated, Tita learns to express herself, as well as her forbidden love for Pedro, through her extraordinary cooking.

Wheeldon accepts that challenge with convincing solos. On opening night, Cassandra Trenary's Tita was danced with exquisite emotional reserve, yet capable of releasing unending passion with Herman Cornejo's Pedro or contending with Christine Shevchenko's sternly commanding Mama Elena.

As a story ballet, "Like Water for Chocolate" functions almost like a French grand opera. There is a lot of plot, which in dance requires a lot of narrative mime; most of it, and its music, is forgettable. One thing leads into another, though, with an impressive technical smoothness that allows fantasy — marvelously so, when the ghost of Elena appears — and reality to intersect with a naturalism that reveals the real genius of ballet. It would take several viewings to catch all the detailed translations Wheeldon makes in his movement language to capture character and incident.

In the end, it is show business that wins out, as when Catherine Hurlin's Gertrudis, Tita's sister who joins the Revolution, leaps with exuberant lyrical abandon. Hee Seo has a more thankless task as Tita's less-lively sister Rosaura, who marries Pedro, but she readily wins our sympathy. Tita weds the affable Dr. John Brown while continuing to carry a flame for Pedro. We're meant to side with true love; Cory Stearns' appealing portrayal as John makes that no sure thing.

The cast is large, filled with any number of minor characters who grab momentary attention. The ABT corps offers heaps of pleasures. The wow moments keep coming.

The ballet ends with a soaring, breathtakingly beautiful pas de deux for Tita and Pedro. It is made to leave you with goosebumps. To not give it a standing ovation is to be hardhearted. Under it all, though, as one schmaltzy cliché follows another, this becomes more the glorification of beauty than the real thing.

As you enter Segerstrom, you may not notice Richard Lippold's grand sculpture "Fire Bird." Once while working on a film with the sculptor, composer John Cage said to Lippold, "Oh, Richard, you have a beautiful mind. It's time you got rid of it."

He did, the reward being that his "Fire Bird" elevates an otherwise uninspired building without needing to catch your eye. The same might go for some of the extravagant signaling of beauty in "Like Water for Chocolate" that manipulates the observer. The ballet's marvels need no help.